

CALIFORNIA - WESTERN AMERICAN
R HOUGH
917.8032 COWBOY
1

R HOUGH
917.8032 COWBOY
1

CALIFORNIA - WESTERN AMERICAN

30439

Santa Clara Valley Library System

Mountain View Public Library

Santa Clara County Free Library

California

Alum Rock

Campbell

Cupertino

Gilroy

Los Altos

Milpitas

Morgan Hill

Saratoga

Stanford-Escondido

{ Calaveras
Community Center
Sunnyhills

{ Quito
Village

Research Center-Cupertino

For Bookmobile Service, request schedule

Santa Clara County
Free Library
San Jose, Cal.

CALIFORNIA - WESTERN AMERICAN

**Santa Clara
County
Free Library**



REFERENCE





BUILDERS OF THE NATION

OR

From the Indian Trail to the Railroad

National Edition

Complete in Twelve Volumes

SANTA CLARA COUNTY LIBRARY



• 3 3305 00248 1368

917.8
H538
1

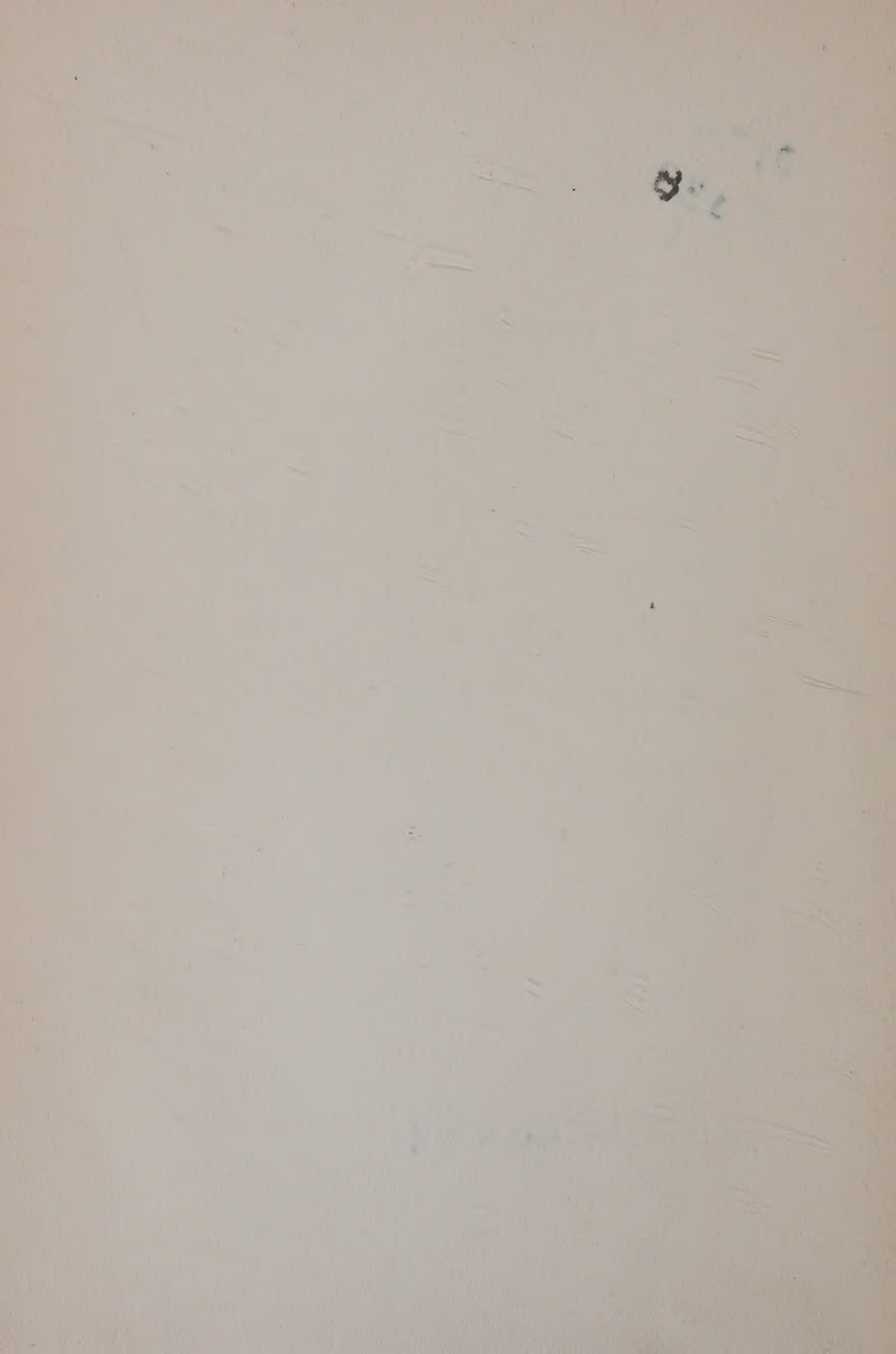
Santa Clara County
Free Library
San Jose, Cal.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	iii
I.—THE LONG TRAIL	1
II.—THE RANCH IN THE SOUTH	9
III.—THE RANCH IN THE NORTH	28
IV.—THE COWBOY'S OUTFIT	50
V.—THE COWBOY'S HORSE	70
VI.—MARKS AND BRANDS	109
VII.—FREE GRASS AND WATER FRONTS	123
VIII.—THE DRIVE	135
IX.—THE ROUND-UP	152

Cowboy. I.

30439



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A COWBOY WATERING HIS HORSE IN THE MISSOURI,
FRONTISPIECE

From an Original Painting by Frank T. Johnson

	PAGE
THE COWBOY	1
CUTTING OUT	45
THE HORSE-HERD	80
BRANDING A CALF	114
ROPING A MAVERICK	172

Cowboy. I.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

LIKE everything peculiarly distinctive, the life of the cowboy through its very raciness has lent itself to literary abuse, and the cowboy has been freely pictured by indolent and unscrupulous pens as an embodiment of license and uproarious iniquity. If he were only this, the great business which he has conducted on the plains could never have grown to its imposing proportions. With the cowboy, as with the Indian, it is essential to disabuse ourselves of illusions. Picturesque the cowboy assuredly is, easily superior, so far as effectiveness is concerned, to the *guacho* of South America and, from an Anglo-Saxon point of view, to the bedizened *vaquero* of Mexico. Beyond this picturesqueness of effect and environment very few have cared to go, and therefore Americans have had little actual realization of the vastness of the cowboy's kingdom, the magnitude of the interests in his care, or the fortitude, resolution, and instant readiness essential to his daily life. The American cowboy is the most gallant modern representative of a human industry second to very few in antiquity. I use the present tense, but, like the other typical figures of the country west of the Missouri, the cowboy is already receding into the shadows of past years. The cattle, wild descendants of Andalusian stock, which he herded in Texas and, later, drove to the North, have been bred

to the ways of civilization, with a distinct gain to their comeliness, if not to their agility. The long trails have been blocked, the ranges traversed by barbed wire, and the superb freedom of the unowned plains is exchanged for the bounds and limits of exact ownership.

Such a chapter of American history demands preservation for reasons æsthetic and practical alike, and it is a happy circumstance that the demand is so aptly met in the union of actual knowledge and graphic expression presented in Mr. Hough's *Story of the Cowboy*. This is not a bare record, not a summary of industrial results, but a living picture of a type often heroic and always invested with an individual interest, and it is a picture also which brings before us the sweep and majesty and splendid atmosphere of the plains.

It seems proper to add that the illustrations, like the text, are based upon actual knowledge and, in the case of Mr. Russell, whose home is a Montana ranch, upon the daily experience of a cowboy's life.

INTRODUCTION.

IN a certain Western city there is the studio of a sculptor whose ambition in life has been to perpetuate the memory of the West. He has sought to put into lasting form the types of that unique and rugged era of our national growth when the soldier and plainsman, the Indian and the cowboy were the citizens of that vast and unknown region. In the following out of that idea he has made in clay and bronze many things entitled to be called curious and beautiful. It is the fancy of this artist at times to take some of these forms and play at pictures with them for the entertainment of his guests. A revolving pedestal is placed in the centre of the room in such way that the light of the fire or of the candles may cast a shadow from it upon the farther wall. Upon the pedestal is placed some figure which appears much magnified upon the white surface beyond, albeit somewhat blurred and softened in its lines. Now it is the likeness of the grizzly bear, now that of the buffalo, while again one sees the lean gray wolf, the tense figure of the flying antelope, or the reaching neck and cut chin of the panther. At one time a mounted Indian may flit upon the wall, or the soldier with sabre and spur. These things, curious and beautiful, form a wild and moving spectacle, coming as they do from a time which may now almost be said to belong to the past.

Upon a certain night this artist had played long with his pictures, when he picked up another figure, holding it for a moment somewhat lovingly, it seemed, before he placed it upon the little monument. "Look!" said he. There upon the wall, of the size of life, jaunty, erect, was the virile figure of a mounted man. He stood straight in the stirrups of his heavy saddle, but lightly and well poised. A coil of rope hung at his saddlebow. A loose belt swung a revolver low down upon his hip. A wide hat blew up and back a bit with the air of his travelling, and a deep kerchief fluttered at his neck. His arm, held lax and high, offered support to the slack reins so little needed in his riding. The small and sinewy steed beneath him was alert and vigorous as he. It was a figure vivid, keen, remarkable. Those who saw it gave it quick applause. When it vanished there was silence, for perhaps here were those who thought upon the story that had been told.

The story of the West is a story of the time of heroes. Of all those who appear large upon the fading page of that day, none may claim greater stature than the chief figure of the cattle range. Cowboy, cattle man, cow-puncher, it matters not what name others have given him, he has remained—himself. From the half-tropic to the half-arctic country he has ridden, his type, his costume, his characteristics practically unchanged, one of the most dominant and self-sufficient figures in the history of the land. He never dreamed he was a hero, therefore perhaps he was one. He would scoff at monument or record, therefore perhaps he deserves them.

Either chiselled or written record may distort if it merely extol. For this central figure of the cattle days, this early rider of the range, it is best to hope that he may not commonly be seen as thrown up on the air in a

mirage, huge, grotesque, fantastic, but that he may rather be viewed clear cut against the Western sky, a glorious silhouette of the open air. Before many years have passed the original of such a picture will have disappeared. We shall listen in vain for the jingle of his spurs, or the creak of his leather gear, or the whipping of his scarf end on the wind. Tinkle and creak even now die away in the distance beyond. An explorer, a surveyor, a guide, a scout, a fighting man, he passed this way. If we study him, we shall study also the day in which he lived, more especially that early day which saw the opening and the climax of that drama of commerce—the cattle industry of the West.

So great an industry could exist only over a vast extent of country. Therefore, although its methods and its followers have had a curious permanency of type, it was foregone that locality should determine a certain variety in its practical customs. Obviously a just estimate of the entire industry or of its leading figure must include alike the dissimilar and the common points of view. This is not easily done, for the vocation of the cattle rancher, once curiously without section, has now become much sectionalized, and has been much modified by agricultural influx—the latter an influence which will produce still greater change in the coming generation, when all the possible farming lands shall have been tapped and tested, and when the farming man shall have begun to look about him and to travel more in a day of cheaper transportation. In the attempt to arrive at an estimate which should be representative and fair, the writer has found his own experience very much aided by that of many rancher friends living or owning property over a wide area of the cattle range. The counsel of these friends has been desirable and valuable in an undertaking such as that

in hand. Especial thanks for critical suggestions are due Mr. George Bird Grinnell, author of the *Story of the Indian*. Mr. Grinnell's experience in the old and the new West has been a wide one, and his observation has extended to the small as well as the large features of practical ranch life, so that his aid has been matter of good fortune. The writer concludes his labour with a sense of the inadequacy of the result, but feeling none the less that the theme itself is an interesting and worthy one.

E. HOUGH.

CHICAGO, ILL., *Dec. 10, 1896.*

THE STORY OF THE COWBOY.

CHAPTER I.

THE LONG TRAIL.

It lies like a long rope thrown idly on the ground, abandoned by the hand that used it. Its strands are unbraided and have fallen apart, lying loose and forgotten upon the sandy soil. The wind is blowing dust across these disconnected threads, and the grasses are seeking to cover them, and the waters have in places washed them quite away. The frayed ends are disappearing. Soon the entire cord will have disappeared. The Long Trail of the cattle range will then be but a memory.

The braiding of a hundred minor pathways, the Long Trail lay like a vast rope connecting the cattle country of the South with that of the North. Lying loose or coiling, it ran for more than two thousand miles along the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains, sometimes close in at their feet, again hundreds of miles away across the hard table-lands or the well-flowered prairies. It traversed in a fair line the vast land of Texas, curled over the Indian Nations, over Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Montana, and bent in wide overlapping circles as far west as Utah and Nevada; as far east as Missouri, Iowa,

even Illinois; and as far north as the British possessions. Even to-day you may trace plainly its former course, from its faint beginnings in the lazy land of Mexico, the Ararat of the cattle range. It is distinct across Texas, and multifold still in the Indian lands. Its many intermingling paths still scar the iron surface of the Neutral Strip, and the plows have not buried all the old furrows in the plains of Kansas. Parts of the path still remain visible in the mountain lands of the far North. You may see the ribbons banding the hillsides to-day along the valley of the Stillwater, and along the Yellowstone and toward the source of the Missouri. The hoof marks are beyond the Musselshell, over the Bad Lands and the *coulees* and the flat prairies; and far up into the land of the long cold you may see, even to-day if you like, the shadow of that unparalleled pathway, the Long Trail of the cattle range. History has no other like it.

The Long Trail was surveyed and constructed in a century and a day. Over the Red River of the South, a stream even to-day perhaps known but vaguely in the minds of many inhabitants of the country, there appeared, almost without warning, vast processions of strange horned kine—processions of enormous wealth, owned by kings who paid no tribute, and guarded by men who never knew a master. Whither these were bound, what had conjured them forth, whence they came, were questions in the minds of the majority of the population of the North and East to whom the phenomenon appeared as the product of a day. The answer to these questions lay deep in the laws of civilization, and extended far back into that civilization's history. The Long Trail was finished in a day. It was begun more than a century before that day, and came forward along the very appointed ways of time.

Señor José Montero, let us say, lived long ago, far down in the sunny land of Mexico. The mountains rose up blue beyond the *hacienda*, and before it the valleys lay wide and pleasant. Life here was very calm, alike for the *haciendado* and the barefoot *peons* who made a servile army about him. There was a little grain, there were a few fruits, and there were herds of cattle. Yes, there were the cattle, and there they had always been, longer than José Montero or his father could remember. It might be that they had always been there, though to be sure there was talk of one Cortez. The cattle might have come from another land, at another time. *Quien sabe?* In the splendid savagery of that land and time it made small difference when or whence they came. There they were, these cattle, lean of flank, broad of horn, clean-limbed, muscular, active, fierce, simply wild animals that knew no care save the hand of force. They produced food, and above all they produced hide and leather.

The sons of José Montero moved slowly north in course of years, and edged into the Indian country lying above the Rio Grande. The priests went with them, to teach them the management of *los Indios reducidos*. The horses and the herds of cattle went slowly north with their owners. Thus, far down in the vague Southwest, at some distant time, in some distant portion of old, mysterious Mexico, there fell into line the hoof prints which made the first faint beginnings of the Long Trail, merely the path of a half-nomadic movement along the line of the least resistance.

The descendants of José Montero's sons spread out over the warm country on both sides of the Rio Grande, and they grew and their herds grew. Many years of peace and quiet passed, broken only by such troubles

as were caused by the Indians, with whom the sons of Montero fared for the most part understandingly. But one day, more than three quarters of a century ago, there appeared in that country men of fierce-bearded faces, many of blue eyes, and all of size and courage. There was war, long years of bitter, relentless, unrecorded war, a war of pillage and assassination, of theft and ambush. The fierce strangers from the North would not be driven back. They increased, they became more formidable. At times they even crossed the Rio Grande and drove away herds to their *ranchos* to the north, these being little less than fortresses or barricades, their life one of armed but undaunted solicitude. In turn the sons of Montero made raids and sallies, and killed men and captured women, and drove away herds. The Long Trail began to deepen and extend. It received then, as it did later, a baptism of human blood such as no other pathway of the continent has known.

The nomadic and the warlike days passed, and there ensued a more quiet and pastoral time. The fierce strangers, perhaps reticent in regard to the methods by which they had obtained what they liked, now held that which they chose to call their own. It was the beginning of a feudalism of the range, a baronry rude enough, but a glorious one, albeit it began, like all feudalism, in large-handed theft and generous murdering. The flocks of these strong men, carelessly interlapping, increased and multiplied amazingly. They were hardly looked upon as wealth. The people could not eat a tithe of the beef, they could not use a hundredth of the leather. Over hundreds and hundreds of miles of ownerless grass lands, by the rapid waters of the mountains, by the slow streams of the plains or the long and dark lagoons of the low coast country, the

herds of tens grew into droves of hundreds and thousands and hundreds of thousands.

Texas had become a republic and a State before a certain obvious and useful phenomenon in the economics of Nature had been generally recognised. Yet at some time and under some condition of observation it had been discovered that the short gray grass of the northern plains of Texas, which the buffalo loved so well, would rear cattle to a much greater size than those of the coast range. A cow of the hot and low country might not weigh more than five or six hundred pounds, whereas if driven north and allowed to range on the sun-cured short grasses, the buffalo grass, the gramma grass or the mesquite grass, the weight might increase fairly by one third. It was the simplest thing in the world to gain this increased value by driving the cattle from the lower to the upper ranges of the great State—always subject to the consent or to the enterprise of the savage tribes which then occupied that region.

This was really the dawning of the American cattle industry. The Long Trail thus received a gradual but unmistakable extension, always to the north, and along the line of the intermingling of the products of the Spanish and the Anglo-Saxon civilizations. Sometimes these fatter cattle were driven back and sold in Old Mexico, but there was no real market there. The thrust was always to the north. Chips and flakes of the great Southwestern herd began to be seen in the Northern States. As early as 1857 Texas cattle were driven to Illinois. In 1861 Louisiana was tried as an outlet without success. In 1867 a venturesome drover took a herd across the Indian Nations, bound for California, and only abandoned the project because the plains Indians were then very bad in the country to the north. In 1869 several herds were driven from Texas to Nevada.

These were side trails of the main cattle road. It seemed clear that a great population in the North needed the cheap beef of Texas, and the main question appeared to be one of transportation. No proper means for this offered. At Rockport and one or two other harborless towns on the Texas coast it was sought to establish canneries for the product of the range, but all these projects failed. A rapacious steamship line undertook to build up a carrying trade between Texas and New Orleans or Mobile, but this also failed. The civil war stopped almost all plans to market the range cattle, and the close of that war found the vast grazing lands of Texas covered fairly with millions of cattle which had no actual or determinate value. They were sorted and branded and herded after a fashion, but neither they nor their increase could be converted into anything but more cattle. The cry for a market became imperative.

Meantime the Anglo-Saxon civilization was rolling swiftly toward the upper West. The Indians were being driven from the plains. A solid army was pressing behind the vanguard of soldier, scout, and plainsman. The railroads were pushing out into a new and untracked empire. They carried the market with them. The market halted, much nearer, though still some hundreds of miles to the north of the great herd. The Long Trail tapped no more at the door of Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, but leaped north again definitely, this time springing across the Red River and up to the railroads, along sharp and well-defined channels deepened in the year of 1866 alone by the hoofs of more than a quarter of a million cattle. In 1871, only five years later, over six hundred thousand cattle crossed the Red River for the Northern markets. Abilene, Newton, Wichita, Ellsworth, Great Bend, "Dodge," flared

out into a swift and sometime evil blossoming. The coming of the markets did not make more fortunes than it lost for the Southern cattle owners, for the advent of the long-horned herds was bitterly contested in many sections of the North, but in spite of all a new industry was swiftly and surely established. Thus the men of the North first came to hear of the Long Trail and the men who made it, though really it had begun long ago and had been foreordained to grow.

By this time, 1867 and 1868, the northern portions of the region immediately to the east of the Rocky Mountains had been sufficiently cleared of their wild inhabitants to admit a gradual though precarious settlement. It had been learned yet again that the buffalo grass and the sweet waters of the far North would fatten a range broadhorn to a stature far beyond any it could attain on the southern range. The Long Trail pushed rapidly still further to the north, where there still remained "free grass" and a new market. The territorial ranges needed many thousands of cattle for their stocking, and this demand took a large part of the Texas drive which came to Abilene, Great Bend, and Fort Dodge. Moreover, the Government was now feeding thousands of its new red wards, and these Indians needed thousands of beeves for rations, which were driven from the southern range to the upper army posts and reservations. Between this Government demand and that of the territorial stock ranges there was occupation for the men who made the saddle their home. The Long Trail, which long ago had found the black corn lands of Illinois and Missouri, now crowded to the West, until it had reached Utah and Nevada, and penetrated every open park and *mesa* and valley of Colorado, and found all the high plains of Wyoming. Cheyenne and Laramie became common words now,

and drovers spoke as wisely of the dangers of the Platte as a year before they had mentioned those of the Red River or the Arkansas. Nor did the Trail pause in its irresistible push to the north until it had found the last of the five great transcontinental lines, far in the British provinces, where in spite of a long season of ice and snow the uttermost edges of the great herd might survive, in a certain per cent at least, each year in an almost unassisted struggle for existence, under conditions different enough, it would seem, from those obtaining at the opposite extreme of the wild roadway over which they came.

The Long Trail of the cattle range was done. By magic the cattle industry had spread over the entire West. To-day many men think of that industry as belonging only to the Southwest, and many would consider that it was transferred to the North. Really it was not transferred but extended, and the trail of the old drive marks the line of that extension. To-day the Long Trail is replaced by other trails, product of the swift development of the West, and it remains as the connection, now for the most part historical only, between two phases of an industry which, in spite of differences of climate and condition, retain a similarity in all essential features. When the last steer of the first herd was driven into the corral at the Ultima Thule of the range, it was the pony of the American cowboy which squatted and wheeled under the spur and burst down the straggling street of the little frontier town. Before that time, and since that time, it was and has been the same pony, the same man, who have travelled the range, guarding and guiding the wild herds, from the romantic up to the commonplace days of the West. The American cowboy and the American cattle industry have been and are one and inseparable. The story of one is the story of the other.

CHAPTER II.

THE RANCH IN THE SOUTH.

DESCRIPTION of the Western cattle industry, whether in regard to its features, its characters, or its environments, must be largely a matter of generalization. The cattle country itself covers a third of the entire territory of the United States. We have sought roughly to divide it into the two sections of the North and South, but it would trouble one to say where even a broad and indefinite line should be drawn which should act as a fair boundary between the two. Should we place that boundary, loosely speaking, somewhere at the central or southern line of the State of Kansas, we shall have established a demarcation at best arbitrary and in many ways inconclusive and inaccurate. Even if we presume that this indefinite line be sufficiently accurate, we shall have left, for our Southern ranch region, a domain many times larger than the entire territory of Great Britain, with a few of her choice provinces thrown into the bargain.

Over so large a region there must prevail some divergence of people and things; and in turn we must remember that all these people and things, more especially as they pertain to the story of the cattle man, have in late years been subject to much change. It would be very natural for any one who had but a partial acquaintance, or one limited to a few sec-

tions of so large a region, to consider as incorrect any specialized description which did not tally with his own observation in his own locality. Still more inaccurate might such an observer consider a description which covered accurately twenty years ago a section which he first sees to-day, in the last quarter of the century. For instance, a citizen of the type our friend the cowpuncher is wont to term a "pilgrim," might go to-day to some railroad point in the vast State of Texas, expecting to find there in full swing the rude ways of the past. He might expect to see the ranchman an uncouth personage, clad in the border garb once pictured in lurid literature or still more lurid drama, his speech full of strange oaths, his home a dugout or a shanty. Much surprised might this stranger be to discover his ranchman a comfortable individual, of well-cut business dress, guiltless of obvious weaponry, and plain and simple in speech. Still more surprised he might be to learn that this ranchman does not live upon his ranch at all, but in the town or city, perhaps many miles therefrom. The ranchman may have an office in the bank, and may be chief stockholder in that institution and other leading concerns of his town. He may be a member of the Legislature, or sheriff of his county, or candidate for higher office. His family may have a son in college, a daughter in the art school of a distant city. The ranch itself, if discovered, may be simply a vast and partly tilled farm, with white-painted buildings, with busy tenantry, and much modern machinery in intelligent use. This would be accurate description of a ranch in the South to-day. But it would be accurate only in particular, not in general, and it would never satisfy the inquirer who knows something of what ranch life once was and is to-day in a wide and wild portion of the Western region.

If we sought to be more general in the outlook for a ranch fit to be called typically Southern, we should certainly have much latitude afforded us. Suppose it to be in the Indian Nations, taking it at that time before the Indians had grown wise in their day and generation, and before the United States Government had evicted many of those opulent tenants, the cattle men of the nations. Let us picture our ranch as lying along some timbered stream, such as the Cimarron, which flows just above the "black-jack" country of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. Here the land lies in long swelling rolls and ridges, with hills of short oak scrub, and wide intervals of prairie. Into the main stream of the river flow many smaller tributaries, and among these are some little creeks heading back among the hills in fresh, unfailing springs, whose waters flow always sweet and abundant throughout the year. Fancy some such little nook, well up in the hills, a half mile from the river, and in imagination surround it with the forest trees which should grow at such a spot. Well down the hillside, sheltered alike by the hill and by the forest from the cold winds which come from the north in winter, stands the ranch house. It is made of logs, much in the style of the lumberman's log house in the pine woods, except that the structure is more careless and less finished. The door is made of a single thickness of unplanned and unmatched boards. It hangs loose upon its rough wooden hinges, and its lock is a rude wooden latch the string whereof literally hangs upon the outside. Wide cracks are open about the edges of the door and about the windows and between the logs at the sides and ends of the room—for there is but one great room in the ranch house proper. Along the wall of this vast apartment are built sleeping bunks, similar to those used by the cabin dwellers of

the pine woods. There is little furniture except a rough table or two, and a few stools or broken chairs. The clothing of the men lies under the bunks or hangs on pegs driven in the wall; for trunks, wardrobes, or private places for individual properties are unknown and unnecessary. The saddles, bridles, ropes, and other gear hang on strong pegs in the covered hallway or open-front room which connects the ranch room with the cook house. This connecting room or open hall is also the lounging place of the many dogs and hounds which make part of the live stock of the place. These dogs are used in the constant wolfing operations, and are a necessity on the ranch, but with them a continual feud is waged alike by the cook from whom they steal, and the foreman with whom they continually endeavour to sleep at night—this by reason of an affection much misplaced; for the foreman is a man of stern ideas of life. The cook house is also the dining hall, and here the same rude arrangements prevail as in the main apartment. There is a long pine table, two or three long wooden benches, perhaps a chair or two. There is a good cook stove, and the dishes are serviceable and clean, though not new or expensive. The cook has his bunk in the kitchen, and is left alone in his own domain, being held a man with whom it were not well to trifle.

The country of the Nations has a climate hot in summer, though not extremely cold in winter, except for occasional cold storms of wind and snow. Such a storm is called a "norther"; by which we may know that we are upon a Southern ranch or one manned by Southern cowmen. In the North the same storm would be a "blizzard." On this range shelter for the cattle is never considered, and they fare well in the timbered hollows even in the roughest weather. Hay is of course

something little known. It is a wild country, and game is abundant. The nearest railway point is one hundred miles to the north, let us say, at least at the time of our visit. The ranchmen do not see civilization more than once a year. They are lonely and glad of the company of an occasional deer hunter who may blunder down into the forbidden Indian lands. All men are welcome at the ranch, and no questions are asked of them. Every visitor goes to the table without invitation, and there all men eat in silence. One has seen at such a meal a hunter, a neighbouring ranchman bound for his place fifty miles below, and two suspected horse thieves, bound for some point not stated. No questions were asked of any of them. In this region, where news is the scarcest of commodities, the idea of gossip is unknown. The habit or the etiquette of the cowboy is not to talk. He is silent as an Indian. The ranch boss is the most taciturn of all. The visitor, when he comes to take his departure, if he is acquainted with the ways and the etiquette of ranch life, does not think of offering pay, no matter whether his stay has been for days, weeks, or months. If he be plainsman and not "pilgrim," no matter whether he be hunter, ranchman, or horse thief, he simply mounts, says "So long," and rides away. The taciturn foreman says "So long," and goes back to work. The foreman's name may be Jim, never anything more, about the place and among his own men. On the neighbouring ranges or at the round-up he is known perhaps as the "foreman on the Bar Y." Some of the cowboys on the Bar Y may be diagnosed to have come from Texas or some Southern cattle country. The foreman may once have lived in Texas. It is not etiquette to ask him. It is certain that he is a good cowman.

This may indicate one phase of ranch life south

of our imaginary boundary line. It is, however, not comprehensive, and indeed perhaps not typically Southern. Let us suppose that the traveller has fared far to the south of the Indian Nations into the country along the Gulf coast of Texas. Here he is still on the cattle range, but among surroundings distinctly different from those of the Indian Nations. The hardwood groves have disappeared and their place is taken by "mottes" of live oaks, whose boughs are draped in the dismal gray of the funereal Spanish moss. There is no word now of swamp or brush or timber, but we hear of chaparral and cactus and mesquite. We are at the southern extremity of the great cattle range. Here the cattle even to-day are not so large as those of the North. They run wild through a tangle of thorn and branch and brier. For miles and leagues—for here we shall hear also of "leagues"—the wilderness stretches away, dry, desolate, abominable. Water is here a prize, a luxury. A few scanty streams trickle down to the arms of the salt bays. Across some such small stream the cattle man has thrown a great dam, costing perhaps a small fortune, and built by an engineer not afraid to use masonry, for he knows what the sudden Southern floods may mean. Thus is formed a vast "tank," at which the cattle water, coming from unknown distances to quench a thirst not stayed completely by the cactus leaves whose thorns line their mouths as they do those of the wild deer of the region. These tanks are the abode of vast swarms of wild fowl which come in from the sea. About them crowds all the wild game of the country. In the mud along their trampled banks one sees the footprint of the cougar, of the "leopard cat," of the wild deer, the wild turkey, the wild hogs, and peccaries, all these blending with the tread of the many wading or swimming birds which find

here their daily rendezvous. Sometimes such tanks run far into the open country back of the "wet prairie," as the sea marsh is generally called, and again they may run close down to the salt bays which make in from the Gulf. Sometimes this artificial water supply of the ranch is supplemented by a few natural lagoons of fresh water, which rarely go entirely dry. These lakes or lagoons or broken pond holes may run for miles through the swales in the coast forest—a forest the most forbidding of any in this whole great country in its ominous gray desolation of twisted trees covered with great festoons of that devil's decoration, the Spanish moss. It is a thirsty land, this of the brooding Southwest, this land of warmth and plenty, where life grows swiftly and is swiftly cut down. Here the cattle mature and breed more rapidly than in the North. They range over many miles of country, many of them forever unknown and uncounted, for the round-up in no part of the Western range is more trying than in the pathless thorny chaparral, where the rider can see but a few yards about him and where no general view is ever possible. Water is the one needful thing, and water is the loadstone which draws to view the cattle man's wealth as nothing else could do; for the cattle must drink.

They must drink, even though the suns of summer dry up the water pools till they are but masses of slime and mud, till they are worse than dry—till they have become traps and pitfalls more deadly than any that human ingenuity could devise. Into these treacherous abysses of bottomless and sticky mud the famished creatures wade, seeking a touch of water for their tongues. Weakened already by their long thirst, they struggle and plunge hopelessly in their attempt to get back to solid land. The hands of the waterless bogs

hold them down. For a day the creature holds its head clear of the mud. Then its head sinks down. Lucky is it if there be water enough to make the mud soft, so that it soon covers the nostrils and cuts off the toiling breath. Above these traps of death clouds of buzzards are always soaring. Others drape the dismal live oaks in lines of sombre black, blending fitly with the sombre gray of the hanging moss. Along the banks of such dried water holes there are always lying hundreds of skeletons. The loss of life is unknown and uncounted. Horses, cows, calves, all the animals of the range perish here yearly in unestimated numbers. The loss of wealth is frightful in the aggregate, yet it is one of the ways of the cattle trade never to regard it and to take no means of preventing it. Indeed, nothing can be done to prevent it. It is the way of Nature. The rancher of the southern range will say to you that you shall have as your own property every horse you shall pull out of the mud, every horned head that you shall save from death in the depth of the waterless bogs. But though you take pony and rope and drag out helpless victim after victim, what then shall you do? They die upon the banks because they can not travel to other water, if indeed there be any other water within many miles. The tragedy goes on year after year, to what extent no one knows. The rancher comes to be entirely careless of it. The business of cattle ranching is primarily but a rude overlapping of the ways of Nature, and to Nature's care and protection are left the creatures whose lives are only partially taken in charge by their human owners.

These untrodden wildernesses of the coast range are now, strange to say, threaded by long lines of wire fence. A "pasture" is an inclosed tract of land perhaps forty or fifty miles square. In the long wire

boundary fence there may not be a gate for twenty miles. The hunter who is lost there feels fortunate if he finds one of these long fences. Yet many a hunter, and many a new man on the range has found such a fence and followed it until he fell, mad with a thirst which he found no way of appeasing. The gray oaks and the evil cacti and the curled mesquite smile bitterly to-day over many such unfound wanderers. The native cowboys and range men know where the trail goes, where the gates are, where the ranch house is—far back, let us suppose, on the high prairie, where the windmills furnish sweet water in an unfailing supply. This house may be built of boards, simply and modestly, and it possibly is left unpainted. The house itself is a long and low one, with but a single story, and constructed with a wide hall extending through, so that the wind may blow in with what coolness it can claim in the torrid summer days. The rooms are large and airy, and the furniture is comfortable. There are green trees about this house, cottonwoods that have grown up tall and thin at the edge of the slender streams of water wasted from the windmill, and some audacious hand has actually planted flowers about a small plat of precious green. Apart from the house of the owner, which is at times occupied by himself and family, there is another and larger building of ruder furnishing. Here we find an interior not widely different from that of the ranch in the Indian Nations. We may find here, too, perhaps, a foreman whose only name is Jim. He has been foreman on the Star D for many years.

This country of the Texas coast is very hot, except in winter when the "northers" come, which chill the blood so strangely and which often kill hundreds of the weaker cattle with their mysterious, penetrating cold. Snow is never known here, and of winter as it is under-

stood in the North there is practically none. The rainfall during the summer is extremely scant. All about the ranch house, miles and miles, as far as the eye can reach, the surface of the earth is gray and cheerless, with few trees inside the range of the low coast timber or chaparral. The hot sun in summer sets all the surface of the earth a-tremble, so that it moves and heaves and writhes. On the horizon float the strange pictures of the mirage. All men know there is no water where the mirage beckons. The water, rare, small, precious, is here, a jewel in this circle of green, this oasis in the apparent desert of the range.

Such is another ranch of the South. But with description so partial and imperfect we shall not even yet have covered our text sufficiently well to entitle us to leave it. We shall have left untouched and unindicated a vast territory of the Southern range where the cattle industry flourished for generations before it was dreamed of in the North. Suppose we move yet some hundreds of miles into the far Southwest, coming to that long arm of Spanish civilization which projects up from Mexico into the United States, last and lax hold upon a region which once bore the flag of Spain. Here, if anywhere to-day upon the cattle range, the ways of the past prevail, and here we shall find an environment as odd and picturesque as any. The Pecos and the Rio Grande rivers bound a vast and ill-known region, which has mountains and plains untraversed by the foot of the American tourist. Here we shall find villages unmarked on any map. We shall find men who in all their lives have never seen a railroad train nor heard the sound of the church-going bell. Life here, beyond that of any section of the United States, is ancient, simple, unprogressive, and truly pastoral in its features. In this far-away corner of the land the ways of modern

life are slow to penetrate. The impact of Anglo-Saxon civilization is taken up by the *vis inertiae* of the old Spanish ways. The vigorous Northerner becomes in a few years a slow-spoken and deliberate New Mexican. The cloudless blue sky, the soft warm air, the unvarying equanimity of Nature will have none of haste or worry. The country makes all men its own. It softens and blends and harmonizes all things and all men into its own indifferent calm.

The tone of our landscape here is not light, but deep in tint, a rich red brown which shades off into the plains and back into the darker colours of the mountains. You would call absolutely barren these wide tracts of land which lie shimmering and throbbing in the unscreened sun. The soil appears to be worthless sand or coarse baked earth. As you look out over such a country you can not believe it possible that it would support any animate life, unless it were this lizard upon the rock, or this hideous horned toad which crawls away from under foot, or these noisy prairie dogs which yelp here as they do upon the northern range. Yet this soil carries the rich gramma grass, whose little scattered tufts, not so large or so gray as those of the buffalo grass, cure and curl down upon the ground and form a range food of wondrous fattening quality.

We are in a mountain country here. The tablelands on which the cattle graze are more than four thousand feet above the level of the sea. The smaller tablelands or *mesas* are still more lofty. The foothills run up above six thousand feet, and back of these are mountains, sometimes low and brown, sometimes black with the heavy growth of piñons, sometimes high enough to have white tops for many months in winter. Snow never falls at this latitude over the lower valleys and *mesas*. Hay is rarely seen, except as imported in

bales. The native Mexican sometimes makes a faint effort to cut a little hay, but does his mowing with a clumsy hoe. His grainfields are but little patches, and the reaping is done altogether with a sickle. In every way this is an ancient and pastoral land.

We are far down in the lower end of the great Rocky range, and at a point where little detached ranges and spurs run out from the main chain and make small mountain systems, each with a Spanish name of its own. We hear of the San Miguels, the Oscuras, the Sacramentos, the Magdalenas, the Capitans, the Nogales, the Bonitos, the Blancos, the Patos, the Carrizos. Out of each of these little subranges runs some one or more mountain streams, each stream called a *rio*, or river, no matter how small it may be. This high table-land is a waterless country. It may be that only one or two scant water holes are known in a space of a hundred or two hundred miles. A tiny well is a treasure. A *rio* is a fortune. In this region of rainless skies water is the one priceless thing.

The small river tumbles swiftly down out of the mountains, as any mountain stream, and it bears the mountain trout as do the waters of the upper ranges; yet after it has emerged from the mountains and passed through the foothills its course is very brief. In a few miles, perhaps twenty, forty, or fifty miles, it sinks and is lost forever in the sands of the plains. Many miles beyond there may be another river arising from the sand and struggling on a little way in the attempt to reach the Pecos or the Rio Grande. Without doubt these waters are connected with the great sheet of water which underlies all that region, and which will sometime be brought up by man to make this desert blossom. What there may be beneath the surface of the earth, however, does not concern our Mexican *ranchero*. It

is enough for him that his father and his father's father held the land and owned the cattle. Bills of sale recording the curious old Spanish brands have been in his family for a long time.

This is an old cattle country. Countless *rodeos* have crossed these hills. Innumerable branding irons have been heated in the piñon fires of these corrals. None the less, this is in America, and hither the American cattle man was sure to come, in search of opportunity to follow the calling which offered to him so much of wealth and so much of fascination. His money or his methods were sure to make him a place even in so old and well-covered a country.

Let us suppose that we have come upon some such modern ranch, down in this ancient part of the cattle range. Back of the home ranch house there is a mountain range, which seems to be only a few miles away, but which is really more than fifty miles distant. It may be that the presence of the mountains has something to do with the water supply of the ranch. There are known to be several springs up in the mountains, and indeed the ranch owner has also purchased these, and has erected near them log houses from the timber of the mountains near at hand, each house being the home of its own party of the range riders. Between the foot of these mountains and the "home ranch" there is no stream of water nor any sign of one, nothing but a dreary expanse of brown and gray desolation. Yet here, by the ranch house, protected by a heavy fence from the intrusion of the animals, there bursts up out of the ground a strong spring of fresh water, strongly alkaline to be sure, but exceedingly valuable. This spring is the *raison d'être* of the ranch house at this point, out on the wide plain, and far from the shelter of the arms of the mountain.

The waters of the great spring, carefully led and utilized, form at a distance of a mile or so from the house a shallow expanse or pool to which the cattle, over a range of probably twenty-five or thirty miles, come regularly to drink. The range near the water is much eaten down, so the animals go far out upon the plains to feed. They do not come to water every day, perhaps sometimes not even so often as once in every other day. An idler at the water pool, lying in wait for the antelope which often come in to water with the cattle, may see far away upon the horizon, toward the middle of the day, long trails and columns of dust, which grow more distinct as the moments pass, until they are seen to be caused by the hurrying squads of cattle coming in to water. They depart as they came, upon a rapid gallop, and their habit is one of the most singular things of the cattle range. Northern farm cattle would perish here, but these are animals seasoned for generations to this environment.

The ranch house here is an edifice entirely distinct in type, the adobe, typical dwelling of the Spanish Southwest. Never was human habitation more nicely adapted than this to the necessities of the country which produced it. No heat can penetrate these walls, more than three feet thick, of the sun-dried native brick or "'dobe." The building is exactly the color of the surrounding earth, and stands square and flat topped, like a great box thrown upon the ground. The roof, which has but the slightest slant from ridge to eaves, is made of heavy beams which hold up a covering, two or three feet in thickness, of hard, dry earth. This roof serves to turn the rain during the short rainy season of midsummer, and moreover it stops the vivid rays of the half-tropic sun. Within the 'dobe it is always cool,

for it is a peculiarity of this climate that the heat is felt only when one is exposed directly to the sun.

The interior of this ranch house is rather attractive, with its walls whitewashed with gypsum, its deep window embrasures, and its hard dirt floor swept clean, as though it were made of wood. A former owner, let us say a wild young man whose family wished him to settle down, but who could not long remain settled at anything, once sought to beautify this place. He put lace curtains at the windows, and at great expense brought out a piano from the railroad, one hundred and fifty miles away. He even essayed rugs and pictures. Other times have brought other customs. The present owner cares more for his water front than for his curtains. The cowboys are welcome to come into this house. They throw their saddles down upon the bed or into the bath tub which once the former owner cherished. They go to sleep under the piano. One has seen their spurs, as they slept, tangled in the lace curtains of the windows. There is no one to order otherwise or to care otherwise. Lace curtains have little to do with raising cattle. There is no woman about the place. Nearly a dozen men live here. The head of the domestic economy is the cook, a German who was once a sailor. The responsible man of the outfit is the foreman, whose name is Jim, and who may have come from Texas. One does not know his other name. Jim is dark-haired, broad-shouldered, taciturn, direct of gaze.

A second building, also of adobe, stands at a little distance from the main ranch house, and this serves as general quarters for the men as well as for kitchen and dining hall. The structure, oddly enough, follows very closely the plan of the ranch house seen in the Indian Nations. There are really two buildings, connected by a covered way or open-air hall, which is

open in front, and which serves as saddle room and storage place for odds and ends. The beds are merely bunks where the men unroll their blankets. In this country no man travels without taking his blankets with him. The furniture of the kitchen is simple, the dishes mostly of tin or ironstone china. The cook, who was a sailor, never learned to cook. To suit the local taste he makes feeble efforts at the peppery Spanish methods. Butter and milk are, of course, unknown on this ranch, as they are on all the ranches of the genuine cattle range, although thousands of cows are all about. There is no historical record of any such event as a cowboy being asked to milk a cow, nor is it likely that anything so improbable ever happened, for had it occurred, the cowboy must surely have evidenced his feelings over such a request in a manner interesting enough to be preserved among the traditions of the range.

At table each man takes off his "gun," this being one of the little courtesies of the land, but no one removes his hat of deliberate intention. It is polite for a stranger arriving at the ranch to leave his belt and revolver hanging on the pommel of his saddle, or to lay them aside upon entering the house. This is delicate proof that he is not "looking for any one." The country at the time of which we write is wild and lawless, and human life is very cheap. Each cowpuncher rides on his daily work with a Winchester in the holster under his leg, and carries at his hip the inevitable .45 revolver. The latter he may use for a chance shot at an antelope or deer, a coyote or a wolf, and it is handy for the killing of an occasional rattlesnake—whose presence, curled up under the shade of a Spanish bayonet plant, the cow pony is sure to detect and indicate by jumps and snorts of the most intense dislike. In the

hands of the cowpuncher the revolver is a practical weapon. One recalls that one evening a cowboy came into camp with the tails of four "crogers" (cougar—the mountain lion) which he said he had met in a body at a little piece of chaparral. He seemed to think he had done nothing extraordinary in killing these animals with his revolver. At times the foreman, Jim, has been known to bring home an antelope which he has killed with his "six-shooter," but this is a feat rarely performed, and only to be attempted successfully by a master of the weapon.

Each home ranch has a corral, and the corral of the Circle Arrow outfit is worthy of our consideration. It is constructed of the most picturesquely crooked cedar logs, and there is not a nail in its whole composition. It is lashed together with rawhide at each joint or fastening, the hide being put on wet, and drying afterward into a rigid and steellike binding, which nothing less than a cataclysm could shake loose or tear apart. We are here upon the Spanish-American cattle range, and since time immemorial rawhide has been the natural material of the Mexican.

Most of the cowboys employed on the Circle Arrow outfit are Mexicans, or "Greasers," as all Mexicans are called by the American inhabitants. Their high-peaked hats, tight trousers and red sashes make them picturesque objects. These men do not speak any English, being popularly supposed to be too lazy to learn it. The speech of the American cowpunchers, on the other hand, is nearly as much Mexican as English, and in common conversation many Spanish words are met, permanently engrafted upon the local tongue and used in preference to their English equivalents. For instance, one rarely hears the word "yes," it being usually given as the Spanish "*si*." The

small numerals, one, two, etc., are usually spoken in Spanish, as *uno*, *dos*, etc. A horse is nearly always called *caballo*, a man an *hombre*, a woman a "*moharrie*" (*mujer*). Even cattle are sometimes called *vacas*, though this is not usual. The cow man of any range clings closely to the designation "cows" for all the horned creatures in his possession. Every one says *agua* when meaning "water." The Spanish diminutives are in common use in the English speech of this region, as *chico*, *chiquito*. The cowboy will speak of the "cavviegah" or "cavviegard" (*caballado*) instead of the "horse herd." One hears *poco tiempo* instead of "pretty soon"; and this expression as coming from a native he will learn all too well, as also the expression *mañana* (to-morrow), which really means "maybe sometime, but probably never."

There are many common descriptive words used in the ranch work which would be strange to the Northern rancher, such as *rincon*, *salado*, *rio*, *mesa*, etc.; and many of the proper names would seem unusual, as applied to the Mexican cow hands, slim, dark, silent fellows, each with a very large hat and a very small cigarette, who answer as José, Juan, Pablo, Sanchez, or Antone, and who when they are uncertain answer, as do all their American fellows, with the all-convenient reply, "*Quien sabe!*" ("kin savvy," as the cowpuncher says).

The Northern ranch country got most of its customs, with its cattle, from the Spanish-American cattle country, and the latter has stamped upon the industry not only its methods but some of its speech. The cowboy's "chaps" are the *chaparéjos* of the Spaniard, who invented them. Such words as *latigo*, *aparéjo*, *broncho* are current all through the Northern mountain and plains region, and are firmly fixed in the vocabulary of

the cow country of the entire West. Indeed, widely sundered as they are in geographical respects, it is but an easy and natural subsequent step, in manners, speech, and customs, from the ranch of the South to its close neighbour, the ranch of the North.

CHAPTER III.

THE RANCH IN THE NORTH.

IT was in the North that there was first established what one would think an obvious principle, though it was one which the Texas rancher was slow to recognise—namely, that a fatted animal is worth more in the market than a lean one. On the range of the Southwest a cow was a cow, a “beef”—any animal over four years of age—was a beef, no matter what the individual differences. Far into the days of the cattle trade all Texas cattle were sold by the head and not by weight. The Northern rancher was the one to end this practice. He did not drive to market the sweepings of his range. Moreover, he saw that the beef-producing qualities of the old long-horned Texas breed could be much improved by the admixture of more approved blood. The cattle of England met the cattle of Spain, to the ultimate overcoming of the Southern type. In less than five years after the first Texas cattle came upon the territorial ranges, the latter were sending better cattle to Texas, over the very trail that had brought the first stock from the lower range. To-day the centre of the beef cattle trade is on the Northern range, and it is some portion of that range which the average Northern man has in mind when he speaks of the “cattle country.”

Yet it is a vast country, this Northern cattle range.

The edge of the Dakota grass lands would make a little state. The basin of the Big Horn alone is as large as any two New England States. There are mountain parks in Colorado which would hold a principality, and the plains of Wyoming are wider than are many European kingdoms. The ranch in the North may be a dugout, well to the east in cold Dakota, where some hardy soul has determined to try the experiment of bringing at least a portion of his cattle through the bitter winter. It may be a cabin in the wild region of the Bad Lands, that Titanic playground of creative evil spirits, where the red scoria buttes and banks, peak after peak, and minaret and tower and high cathedral, all in parti-coloured clays, are burned out of the earth to endure and mock the dreams of man the architect. The ranch may be a hut in some high mountain valley, where the bold summits of the white-topped mountains sweep about in the wild beauty of the Snowy Range. Again, it may be a sod house, built on some wide bleak plain, where the wind never is still, and where the white alkali cuts and sears the unseasoned skin. It is somewhere upon that vast, high, hard, and untilled table-land which runs from the Gulf coast to the British possessions, upon the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains.

This is a land of little rain and of infrequent water courses, but a land where cattle can live the year through without the aid of man, summer and winter, upon the short gray grass which grows in abundance all over the former range of the buffalo. This upper portion of the great plateau is dry enough to be classified as belonging to the arid lands, but is nevertheless watered much better than the southern range. The streams are larger and more frequent, and are not so apt to go entirely dry in the droughty season

of summer. The snows are heavier in winter, and the rainfall of the spring months is relatively more abundant, so that the grasses are much better nourished and are not burned out so cruelly as in the South. Under such conditions the cattle of the plains were found to grow far more bulky than in the Southern country. Moreover, the upper part of what is now the northern range was still open and unsettled at a time when a great body of population was pressing up to the edge of these plains, looking for new country and new grazing grounds, and only waiting for the Army to clear away the hostile Indians sufficiently to make the region safe for occupancy. Indeed, long before the Indians had been removed, and before the range was anything better than a dangerous Indian hunting ground, the adventurous ranchmen had been all over it, and were living there, scattered about here and there, and already engaged in the early and cruder stages of their calling.

After the years of 1868 and 1869 the Northern country was occupied, as if by magic, by the herds of the enterprising ranchers who saw the rapid wealth that was to be accumulated under the conditions of the trade in a new and favourable region. Cattle bought at a few dollars per head, delivered on the range free of freight charge, raised "on air," and free air at that, attended by a few men to many hundred head of cattle, and sold in a few years at prices four or five times the first cost per head—surely it was no wonder that at once an enormous industry sprang up, one that attracted the interest of conservative capital in this country, and invited floods of capital not so wise from other lands. Enthusiastic at the prospect of early wealth, and enamoured of the manly and independent life that offered, very many young men of the Eastern States, some with money and financial resources, some

with only hope and a branding iron, plunged into the cattle business of the upper ranges. Many of these made money, and all of them brought energy and a certain amount of new intelligence to their chosen calling. The Southern rancher perhaps grew up in the trade, knowing no other, whereas sometimes the Northern rancher was a new man, who learned the business later in life. None the less the cattle industry received a tremendous impetus in a very brief time, old men and new studying the requirements of the new countries opened, and uniting in perfecting the operations of the range in every possible respect of system and detail.

Already there was upon the range an instructor, a guide, and a practical leader, waiting to take charge of every phase of the cattle business. The cowpuncher appeared upon the Northern plains as rapidly and mysteriously as the thousands of cattle. It were bootless to ask whence he came. From the earlier Southern regions originally, no doubt, but not in all his numbers. He drifted in upon these upper ranges from every corner of the globe. There was always upon the Western frontier a press of hardy young men, born and inured to the rude conditions of the life beyond the line of the towns, and the natural fitness and natural longings of these led them readily into the free outdoor life of this peculiar calling. Some would-be ranch owners, failing in their undertakings, settled back into the occupation of the cowboy. Wild and hardy young men from other countries came in, attracted by the loadstone of freedom and adventure, ever potent upon hot-headed youth.

The range riders had odd timber among them, men rude and unlettered, and men of culture and ability. Quite a noticeable feature of the new cattle

country was the influx of young men of good family who became infatuated with the cowboy's life and followed it for a time, perhaps never to forsake the plains again. In the late '70's and early '80's one might often see strange company in the great cattle yards at Kansas City, where the train loads of Western cattle came in charge of the men who had had them in care upon the range. Among groups of these men, often rough looking and roughly clad, and sitting sometimes on the ground in the shade of the cattle cars, one might perhaps hear in progress a conversation which he would rather have expected to hear in an Eastern drawing room. It was no unusual thing to see men clad in regulation cowpuncher garb reading a copy of the latest monthly magazine or a volume of the classics. This may have been reversion to early habit, and such men may or may not have remained in the calling.

Certainly the man aspiring to the title of cowboy needed to have stern stuff in him. He must be equal to the level of the rude conditions of the life, or he was soon forced out of the society of the craft. In one way or another the ranks of the cowpunchers were filled. Yet the type remained singularly fixed. The young man from Iowa or New York or Virginia who went on the range to learn the business, taught the hardy men who made his predecessors there very little of the ways of Iowa or New York or Virginia. It was he who experienced change. It was as though the model of the cowboy had been cast in bronze, in a heroic mould, to which all aspirants were compelled to conform in line and detail. The environment had produced its type. The cowboy had been born. America had gained another citizen, history another character. It was not for the type to change, but for others to conform to it.

He who sought to ride by the side of this new man, this American cowboy, needed to have courage and constitution, a heart and a stomach not easily daunted, and a love for the hard ground and the open sky. There were many who were fit so to ride. Of these the range asked no questions. If there had been trouble back in the "States," trouble with a man, a sweetheart, or a creditor, it was all one, for oblivion was the portion offered by the hard ground and the sky. Let us not ask whence the cowboy came, for that is a question immaterial and impossible of answer. Be sure, he came from among those who had strong within them that savagery and love of freedom which springs so swiftly into life among strong natures when offered a brief exemption from the slavery of civilization. The range claimed and held its own. The days of the range were the last ones of American free life. They preceded the time of commerical life, that stage of civilization when all men must settle down to wear, patiently or impatiently, the yoke that is imposed by the artificial compact of society.

It is probable, then, that we should see small difference between Jim, the foreman of the T Bar ranch in Wyoming or Montana, and the Jim who was foreman of the Bar Y, or of the Star D, or of the Circle Arrow in the Southwest country. It is still uncertain where Jim lived before he came on the ranch, and it is still immaterial, for it is certain that he is a good cowman.

In appearance Jim is a man of medium height, with good shoulders, none too square, but broad enough. He is thin in flank, lean and muscular, with the firm flesh of the man not only in perfect physical health but in perfect physical training. Life in the saddle, with long hours of exercise and a diet of plain food, has left not an ounce of fat to prevent the free play of the firm

muscles one above the other. His skin is darkened and toughened by the wind and sun and alkali. His hair is not worn long, as persons of a certain class would have us believe was the correct thing for scout or Westerner in the "old times." Jim's hair is hid under his big hat, but very likely hangs in a rough mop down from under his hat and upon his forehead, like the forelock of a pony.

Jim's eye may be of the red hazel of the ready fighter, or the gray of the cold-nerved man, or the blue of the man who is always somewhere about when there is fun or trouble afloat in whatever corner of the world. It is hard to see Jim's eyes, because the bright sun causes him to hold them well covered with the lids, with a half squint to them. His mustache may have been tawny or brown or nearly black at first, but now it is sunburned and bleached to a yellow, faded hue. Upon his feet Jim makes a very poor figure. He is slouchy, awkward, and shambling in his gait, for his feet, in the vernacular of the range, do not "track," but cross each other weakly. His legs are bowed, with the curve which constant horseback riding in early youth always gives. His toes turn in distinctly as he walks. He does not stand erect, but stoops. But in the saddle he sits erect, and every action shows strength, every movement the grace of muscles doing their work with unconscious ease and sureness. The world can produce no horseman more masterly. With the "rope" he can catch the running steer by whichever foot you shall name. He can "roll a gun" with either hand, or with both hands at once. He has a perfect knowledge of the nature of the steer, and knows the trade to the last detail. He has all the hardihood and courage which come of long familiarity with trouble, hardship, and peril; for what

is called courage is very much a matter of association and habit.

With his employer Jim is as honest and faithful as any man that ever breathed. In his conversation he is picturesque and upon occasion volcanic of speech. In his ways of thought he is simple, in his correspondence brief. It was perhaps this same Jim, foreman of the T Bar, who wrote to the Eastern ranch owner the quarterly report which constituted for him the most serious labour of the year, and which is said to have read as follows:

“Deer sur, we have brand 800 caves this roundup we have made sum hay potatoes is a fare crop. That Inglishman yu lef in charge at the other camp got to fresh an we had to kill the son of a ——. Nothing much has hapened sence yu lef. Yurs truely, Jim.”

It was possibly Jim, the foreman, who licked the young cub whom everybody called “Kid” into the shape of a cowboy, and it may have been he who taught the wealthy cattle owner something of the essentials of the business as they have come down in the traditions of the range. Grim, taciturn, hard-working, faithful, it was this cowboy of the range who made the mainstay of the entire cattle industry. Without him there could never have been any cattle industry. He was its central figure and its reliance, at the same time that he was its creature and its product.

If it make small difference who the cow puncher was or whence he came, it will make little difference, either, at what exact portion of the vast empire of the Northern cattle range there was located the home ranch of the T Bar outfit. It might have been at any point within a circle of five hundred miles, and still have had

the same general characteristics. Let us suppose the ranch building to be located upon the upper portion of some one of the great rivers of the Yellowstone system, in that region so long the range of the buffalo and the home of the red ranchers who never branded their cattle. This river debouches from the great and snowy mountains which are plainly visible beyond the foothills of the chain. The soil of the river valley, the detritus of ages carried down and spread out by the waters, is deep and rich. The river, subject as are all the streams of the region to sudden freshets or to seasons of low water, is well fed and regulated in its upper waters by the deep snows which each season fall upon the mountains and which hardly melt entirely away throughout the year. Into this larger stream flow other streams at intervals, these heading back into the high grounds of the plains. Along the stream in this upper valley the red willows grow densely. They form a heavy bank of shelter at the arm of the river where the ranch house is built. Below this point the valley spreads out into a wide natural meadow, and here the water has been led out in an irrigating ditch, so that a considerable extent of hay land has been established. All that this soil needs is water to make it fruitful as any in the world. The ranch owner has realized this, and at times a tiny, scraggy garden gives rich reward for all the care bestowed upon it, though here, as all over the cow country, the tin can is the main dooryard decoration. Wheat, oats, and corn could be raised here also, but the ranch man hopes that fact will be long in its discovery by others. His own concern is the raising of cattle.

Over all the high plains back from the river valley the sage brush and the bunch grass grow, as they do all over the "arid belt," and give no promise of

the vegetation that needs water at its roots. Not far from the ranch there may be small green valleys, six or seven thousand feet above sea level, each with ten or twenty miles of grazing ground, where the grass grows tall and green as it does in the "States"; but contrary to what the tenderfoot would expect, the cattle do not crowd in to feed upon this luxuriant and fresh-looking grass, but range far out upon the desolate bunch grass country where, to the eye of the novice, there is no food at all for them. The big flies go with the tall grass, and in these green valleys neither cow, horse, nor human being can endure their vicious and continuous assaults. The green grass is forsaken utterly. Early teamsters who crossed the plains, freighting to Denver in the days before the railroads, often struck such valleys where the greenhead flies made life for their horses or oxen almost unbearable. The valley of the Rawhide, in Nebraska, was such a spot. Here the flies were so bad that the horses had to be kept in darkened barns all day, and at night the mosquitoes swarmed upon the unprotected horses of the freighters in such numbers that the poor groaning creatures could not rest and were driven nearly frantic.

Below our ranch house the river marches on, broadening out and flowing more and more gently, until it in turn passes into some other affluent of the Yellowstone-Missouri system. At the point where the ranch house is located, or a little way above it, the waters have not yet lost the colour they bore in the mountains, a bright, bluish green. There are fine mountain trout within a day's journey that the cook sometimes catches when he is not too lazy to go out after them. But soon after leaving this elevation, and reaching the red soil of the lower plains, the river becomes tinged and discoloured, then red, roily, perhaps full of quick-

sands, and no longer beautiful to behold. Here the cottonwoods, those worthless yet indispensable trees of the plains, troop in along the water and spread out their brittle, crooked arms. They give a little shade, and serve for a sort of fuel. In the old freighting days the teamster of the plains always carried an extra axle and a spare wheel or two against accident on his long journeys, but it is related of one improvident wagoner that he at one time found himself with a broken axletree and no timber near except some cottonwoods. He tried a half dozen times to make an axle of the ill-grained soft wood, but finally gave it up, and history states that he finally turned out his team there, and stopped and located a farm, because he could not get away from the country.

In times past these cottonwoods along our river served another purpose. Here, in a sheltered valley, where the willows make a wide thicket extending back over the bottoms for half a mile or more, there are cottonwoods which bear strange burdens, long and shapeless bundles, wrapped in hides or rags. It is the burial place of the red men, with whom the cowpuncher is at war. For these rude graveyards the irreverent cowpuncher has no respect. He tears down the bundles and kicks them apart, hunting for beads and finger bones. Around the cow camp there is knocking about the skull of an Indian, a round hole in the temple. This came from the sandhills, where it had never been accorded even so rude a burial as the one described. Once the Cheyennes swooped down and the cowmen met them. Thirteen of the Cheyennes did not go back when the war party retreated to the villages to tell their people of the new fighting men who had come into the country.

The T Bar cattle roam over a million acres or so

of land, of which the rancher perhaps owns one hundred and sixty acres. Of course, at this date, no attempt is made at fencing the range, though a few rough stops of logs or trees may keep the cattle back from some creek valleys or cañons where it is not desired that they should go. It is still "free grass" on the range. The cattle are held on a certain part of the country, and prevented from drifting off to the range of another outfit by "outriding." Each day the cow-punchers "ride sign" around the edge of the agreed territory, turning back or looking up any cattle that seem to be wandering from their proper range. At points some miles away from the home ranch, perhaps fifteen or twenty miles or more, there are other and less pretentious quarters built for the outriders. For instance, Red, one of the hands, starts out in the morning and rides the eastern edge of the range to the Willow Spring cabin, where he meets Curly, who came down from above on the same side. They stop together over night at the cabin, if they are near it when dark comes, and in the morning separate and return the way they came. Or perhaps both may live at this camp most of the time. The range riders are continual sentinels and pickets, besides being courier, fighting force, and commander, each for himself.

Our ranch house stands upon a slightly spot, here in the bend of the blue river. This was a favourite camping place for hunters and trappers in the days before the beaver were gone. The old camps are gone now, and in their place stands the long and substantial cabin which makes the home ranch house. This is a building better than those seen on the southern range, for here the climate, though very hot in summer, is exceedingly cold in winter, and more care needs to be taken with the habitation. The house is built of

logs, the logs perhaps hewn and squared. The roof is made of logs, boughs, hay, and dirt, or if very modern it may be covered with riven "shakes" or shingles, with perhaps an attempt made at a rude porch or veranda, this taking the place in some extent of the midway hall of other ranches we have seen. The doors and windows are well fitted, for the intense cold of winter will tap sharply every open joint. There is a huge fireplace, and moreover a big "cannon" stove. Rough bunks line the walls, as in the general scheme of the Western ranch house, and on these are beds of heavy blankets, underlaid with robes and skins. The matchless robe of the buffalo at one time played an important part in Northern ranch economy. Upon the floors are the skins of elk and deer, of the mountain lion, and of the bear. The ranchman is almost of necessity a hunter, and this range lies in the heart of one of the great game regions of the land. Upon the walls of the room there hang upon long wooden pegs some of the less used saddles, bridles, "chaps," ropes, and other gear of the men. The cow puncher may throw his hat upon the floor, but is very apt to hang up his spur. Or he may come in tired from a long ride, and rolling himself up in his blankets in the cocoon style of the Westerner, fall asleep with his clothes on, boots, spurs, and all. His life is one of camps and marches. Of a regular home life or settled habits he knows nothing. Civilization is still far off. He sees the railroad perhaps twice a year. Then he sleeps upon a mattress and has a "reg'lar goose-har piller," of which he tells his companions when he comes back to the ranch. He sleeps as well as he eats or rides. The fresh air of the mountains has blown every *malaise* from his system. He rises in the morning with his "fists full of strength," exulting in the sheer animal vigour of per-

fect health, the greatest blessing that can come to any man. The cowpuncher is a survival.

The harsh Northern country, stern as it is and unfriendly of aspect, is none the less in some of its phases kindly and beautiful. In the spring the wind blows soft, and many small flowers come out from under the snow. The willow buds swell and burst. The trout run, and the hordes of grouse in the willow thickets break up their packs and spread out over the country. The wild geese cross northward, bound still farther on toward the land of cold. Small birds twitter and flit about the ranch house, and little squirrels come, and the mountain rats appear from their nests. The wind blows steadily, but its bravado is understood and not dreaded. The spring floods of snow water boil down all the water ways, and presently the spring rains come and drench out all the frosts that lie in the ground. Then the prairies show a carpet of flowers dotting in their brief beauty the strips of green so soon to lose their colour. Deeper dashes of green spread out along the wet grounds bordering the smaller streams. The sagebrush blossoms and the trees of the little parks put out new buds and begin again the cycle of unfailing hope. Yet spring is not greeted here as a seedtime. No ploughs cut the soil of these iron plains. No wagon wheel marks the hard surface for the notice of the range rider going upon his long rounds. No figures of men setting forth to fields, of horses labouring at drill or harrow, meet his gaze fixed upon the far horizon. Just seen upon some distant ridge there may be the outline of a figure, but if so, it is that of another rider like himself, and bound upon a similar errand. Or it may be the shape of an Indian rider, perhaps several of them, off their reservation with or without permission, and hurrying under whip across

the country on some forbidden hunt or distant visit. The Indian plies his whip and looks straight ahead, but he has seen the cowboy. The cowboy sees him too, and smiles contemptuously. He dreams not of the day when he, too, shall be a fitting figure disappearing across the range.

In the spring the cattle straggle out from the warmer and more sheltered portions of the range where they have been huddled during the more biting times of winter. They feed with eagerness and unceasing industry upon the fresh-growing grasses. The little calves begin to totter along awkwardly by the side of their gaunt mothers, whose hips and ribs project prominently in sign of the long season of cold and scarcity with which they have been at war. Coyotes sneak along the hillsides at the edges of the herds, in the morning at sunrise sometimes sitting upon the tops of the high ridges and joining in a keen tremulous chorus, one of the familiar sounds of the range. At times a circle of the great gray buffalo wolves—pests of the cattle range—close in about a mother and her calf, lying down, bounding about, playing and grinning. The feeble cow fights as she can, perhaps getting to the circle where others stand and fight. The snarling pack will in time pull down their prey. The rider of the T Bar range reports many calves and heifers killed by wolves. It is one of the factors of loss to be figured upon regularly. He notes also roughly as he makes his early trips over the range the numbers of cattle that “did not winter.” At these red or tawny blotches which lie about over the landscape the coyotes are feeding, then the foxes and swifts. Perhaps by some carcass the cowboy notes the long footmark of the grizzly bear, which has awakened from its sleep in the hills and begun a long series of

marches in search of food, always scarce for it in the early spring before the crickets and mice begin to move and before the berries ripen. The bear has torn apart with his rugged strength the ribs of the carcass and batted his fill upon the carrion. Ravens cross from side to side. Life and death are in evidence together upon the range in spring. These lean cattle, their rough hair blowing up in the wind, are the survivors. The range is no place for weaklings. The cowpuncher, who is no weakling, rides along over the range, guessing at the proportion of survival in the herd, estimating how many calves the outfit will brand at the round-up soon to begin, figuring on how many strange cattle have drifted in on this part of the range during the last storms of the winter. His eye catches with trained precision the brand of each animal he sees. He is observant of every detail connected with his calling as he rides along, unconscious of his horse, his arm high and loose, his legs straight to the big stirrups, his body from the hips up supple and swinging, his eye ranging over the wide expanse of plain and *coulee*, butte and valley that lies before him. This wide book is his, and he knows it well. The little larks twitter and flit from in front of him low along the ground as the pony trots ahead, and the prairie dogs chatter from their mounds. If the horse makes a shy-ing bound from some lazy rattlesnake that has come out from winter quarters to stretch awhile in the sun, the thighs of the rider tighten, and the ready oath leaps to his lip as he strikes the spur to the horse's flank and asks it, in the picturesque language of the plains, what are its intentions as connected with a future life.

And then comes on the summer time, with its swift and withering heat. The range shrivels and sears.

The streams dwindle and shrink. The flowers are cut down by the torrid winds. The sage brush is gray and dismal. The grass is apparently burned to tinder. The edges of the water holes are trampled and made miry by the hoofs of the cattle which press in to water. Out in the hot air the white alkali flats glimmer and shift in the distance. Above them stalk the strange figures of the mirage, cousins of the *Fata Morgana* of the southern range. In this weird mirage the figures of the cattle appear large as houses, the mounted man tall as a church spire. The surface of the earth waves and trembles and throbs in the heat like an unsteady sea. The sun blisters the skin of any but the native, and the lips of the tenderfoot blacken and shrivel and crack open in the white dust that arises. In the soft mud which lies between the shore and the water at the watering places lie the figures of cattle which have perished there, but in this hot dry air they dry up like mummies, the skin tightening in parchment over their bones. Though the nights are cold, the day flames up into sudden heat. If there be a rain, it is a tempest, a torrent, a cloud burst which makes raging floods out of dried-up river beds, and turns the alkali flats into seas of slimy, greasy mud. Through it all, over it all, the cowpuncher rides, philosophical and unfretted. With him it is unprofessional to complain.

In turn comes autumn, when the winds are keener. The cattle are sleek and fat now, though by this time the fattest have after the beef round-up found their mission in the far-off markets. Now the leaves of the quaking asp in the little mountain valley, which were light green in spring, dark green in summer, begin to pale into a faded yellow. The wild deer are running in the foothills, and over the plains sweep in ghostly

flight the bands of the antelope. The bears have gone up higher into the table-lands to seek their food and look about for a sleeping place. The wild geese are again honking in the air, this time going toward the south. The mallards swim in the little eddies of the creeks, not to leave them till later in the winter when the ice closes up the water. The smaller birds seek warmer lands, except the mountain jays, the camp birds, and the ravens, which seem busy as with some burdening thought of winter. The rousing whistle of the challenging elk is heard by the cowboy whose duties take him up into the hills. The pause of Nature gathering her energies for the continuance of the war of life is visible and audible all about. The air is eager and stimulating. In the morning the cow-punchers race their plunging ponies as they start out from the ranch, and give vent in sheer exuberance to the shrill, wolf-keyed yell which from one end of the range to the other is their fraternal call.

The snows whitened long ago the tops of the mountains in the range. The foothills are white with snow every morning now, and the wind blows cold even down in the little valley where the willows break its force. Winter is coming. The wild deer press lower down from the mountains. The big bear long ago went to sleep up in the hills. With a rush and a whirl some night the winter breaks. In the morning the men look out from the cabin door and can see but a few feet into the blinding, whirling mass of falling snow. This is not the blizzard of midwinter, but the first soft falling of the season. Presently the storm ceases, the sun shining forth brilliantly as though to repent. The earth is a blinding mystery of white. The river has shrunk in its barriers of ice, and over the edges of the ice hang heavy masses of snow. The

willows are heavy with snow, and the grouse that huddle in packs among them are helpless and apathetic.

Then the early snow settles and hardens, and is added to by other snows. The mallards in the little spring creek have but a narrow swimming place now left to them. Along the bank of the river appears the curious drag of a travelling otter, driven down by the too solid closing of the stream above. The great round track of the mountain lion has been seen at one or two places on the range, and that of the big gray wolf, the latter as large as the hoof mark of a horse. The cowpuncher at one of the out camps who steps to the door at midnight and looks out over the white plain, when the moon is cold and bright and the stars very large and beautiful, hears wafted upon the air the long, dreary, sobbing wail of the gray wolf, sweeping in its tireless gallop perhaps forty miles a night across the range in search of food. He will find food.

And now midwinter comes. The cold becomes intense. Horse and cow have now put on their longest coat of hair, all too thin to turn the edge of the icy air. Yet the wind is their friend. It sweeps constantly for them, moaning that it can do no better, the tops of the hills where the blessed bunch grass lies curled and cured for food. It sweeps at the hillsides, too, and makes the snow so thin that the horses can easily paw it away and get down to the grass, and the cattle find at least a little picking. From the hills the snow is blown away in masses that fill the ravines and gullies in deep drifts. It packs against the cut banks so hard that the cattle may cross upon it. The hand of the winter is heavy. It is appalling to the stranger in its relentless grasp at the throat of life. The iron range is striving bitterly with all its might to hold its own, to

drive away these invaders who have intruded here. It is hopeless. These men are the creatures for the place and hour. They survive.

And the cattle. Ah! the cattle. They did not choose of their own volition this Northern country of cold and ice. They were driven here from a very different clime. Yet they retain the common desire of animate things, and seek to prevail over their surroundings. Gradually the creature shall adapt itself to the surroundings or perish. The cattle feed on the swept hillsides, losing flesh, but living. A thaw followed by a freeze is the worst thing that can befall them, for then the grass is sealed away from them, and upon their backs is formed a cake of ice, a blanket of cold continually freezing their very vitals and oppressing them with a chill which it is useless to attempt to escape. The cattle then soon cease in their struggle for life. They huddle together in little ragged groups in the lee of such shelter as they can find, their rough coats upright and staring. They no longer attempt to feed. One by one they lie down.

The Northern cattle range is not a hay country, and the early cowman counted naught on hay. Yet sometimes a little hay was made, and, in the case of a prolonged cold season such as that described, an attempt was made to feed the cattle. Of course, the thousands of the herds can not be fed, but some of the weaker of the cattle are rounded up and a rough effort is made at giving them a little care. The hay is thrown off the wagons to them in the corrals as they stand where they were driven, humped up, shivering in mortal rigours, many of them frozen. At times their legs, frozen to the bone, are too stiff to have feeling or to be capable of control. The animals stumble or fall or are jostled over, and are too feeble ever

to rise. The croak of the raven is the requiem of the range.

It is winter on the northern range, but though it be winter the work of the cowboy is not yet done. At times he must ride the range, in a partial way at least, to keep track of the cattle, to see whether any are back in box cañons from which they should be driven, to see whether any are "drifting." Knowing the danger of a sudden storm upon such a ride, he goes well prepared for the work. Many men have gone out upon the range in winter who never came back again to the cabin. Their rough companions at the ranch do not say much if the cowpuncher does not return from out the sudden raging storm that may set in without an hour's warning. Each man would risk his own life to save that of his fellow, but each man knows how futile is the thought of help. The whole atmosphere is a whirling, seething, cutting drift of icy white, in which the breath is drawn but in gasps, and that only with face down wind. The heaviest of clothing does not suffice, and not even the buffalo coat can stop the icy chill that thickens the blood into sluggishness and makes drowsy every vital energy. The snow covers the trail of the wanderer, as it winds his burial sheet about him and hides him from hope even before death has come to stop his last feeble, insentient efforts to struggle on. But all the men know which way to look—down wind somewhere, for it could have been in no other direction. He may be lying a long, shapeless blot on the earth, his clinched hands over his head to shut out the snow and the thought of death, in some little *coulee* miles and miles from where the blizzard caught him. There have been seen riderless horses on the range, with parts of saddle still hanging to them. The round-up may perhaps find

the place where the cowpuncher is sleeping through many sleeps.

But in winter the work of the cowman is much less. He has time to sit and spin a yarn and smoke a pipe indoors even in the daytime, and at night he adds disfigurement to the single deck of cards. In the ranch house it is warm no matter what the snows and winds are doing. Perhaps the employer of these men does not live upon the ranch; indeed, it is most unlikely that he is spending the winter there. Perhaps back in some city in the "States" the owner may be sitting in his comfortable home, possibly planning about his trip out to the ranch for the spring round-up. The owner may be rich, but he may be ill, and he may not be entirely happy here in his Eastern home. He may know the troubles incident to life in the complex fabric of highly organized society. In his heart he may long for that other fireside, the roaring fireplace in the house of the T Bar ranch. He can see the cowboys in their shirt sleeves sitting about the fire smoking after their evening meal, their knees in their hands or their elbows resting on their knees, their hair hanging down tangled. He can see the big shadows the fire is making on the rude tapestried wall of the T Bar house. He envies those wiry fellows who loll or sit about the fire.

CHAPTER IV.

THE COWBOY'S OUTFIT.

IN the cowboy country the fashions of apparel do not change. The fashion plates of our own history show the extremes of customs based largely upon folly or caprice, or the plots of tradespeople. The cowboy has been above such change. He is clad to-day as he was when he first appeared upon the plains. His character has been strong enough to be above prettinesses and uselessnesses. His weapons and his dress show none of the idle ornamentation bestowed by those peoples who would rather carve and embroider than march and fight. The costume of the cowboy is permanent because it is harmonious with its surroundings. It is correct because it is appropriate. It will remain as it is so long as the cowboy himself remains what he has been and still is—a strong character, a self-poised individual, leaning on no other soul. We call his costume picturesque, but that is because it takes us into places to which we are unaccustomed. We call the absurdities of many European natives also picturesque, with their starched and frilled appendages, which can be of no possible use or advantage in any human garb. But when we come to note closely the costume of the cowboy, we shall find that it has been planned upon lines of such stern utility as to leave us no possible thing which we may call dispensable.

By the costume we may tell the man. We can not fail to recognise a nature vigorous far beyond those weak degenerates who study constantly upon changes in their own bedeckings.

The coat, trousers, and waistcoat of the cowboy are of the rough sort commonly obtained at the rude stores of the frontier. They are, of course, ready made, and of course they do not fit in the city acceptation of the term. They are sure to be of wool, and they are sure to be large and roomy enough. It is one of the odd things of the Southern country that the men largely affect black or dark-coloured clothing. The men of the Southern cities to-day nearly all wear black clothing as their business dress, and it is rarely that one sees anything but a black hat, though that would seem to be precisely the sort of wear most illy adapted to a land of blazing sun. The early cowboy ideas of perfect dress reverted somewhat to this predilection for dark clothing. In more recent times the mixed goods and lighter colours, which one would naturally consider far more sensible for such wear, have come into wider use, but this is mainly because the storekeepers of the frontier have had such goods for sale.

The typical cowboy costume can hardly be said to contain a coat and waistcoat. The heavy woollen shirt, loose and open at the neck, is the common wear at all seasons of the year excepting winter, and one has often seen cowboys in the winter time engaged in work about the yard or corral of the ranch wearing no cover for the upper part of the body excepting one or more of these heavy shirts. If the cowboy wears a coat, he will wear it open and loose as much as possible. If he wears a vest, you will see him wear it slouchily, hanging open or partly unbuttoned most of the time. There is reason in this slouchy Western habit. The cowboy

will tell you that your vest closely buttoned about the body will cause you to perspire, so that you will quickly chill upon ceasing your exercise. His own waistcoat, loose and open, admits the air freely, so that the perspiration evaporates as rapidly as it forms. If the wind be blowing keenly when he dismounts to sit down upon the ground for dinner, he buttons up his waistcoat and is warm. If it be very cold, he buttons also his coat. Meantime you, who have followed the customs of the "States" in your wearing apparel, will be needing two overcoats to keep you warm. A tight coat, a "biled shirt," or a buttoned waistcoat are things not recognised in Cowboyland.

When we come to the boots of the cowboy we shall find apparent foundation for the charge of inutility. Very curious boots indeed they are, and it is an easy wager that one would be unable to buy a pair of them in the length and breadth of most large Eastern cities to-day. Of fine leather, with light, narrow soles, extremely small and high heels, and fitting so tightly as to bind the foot and cramp the toes in a most vice-like grasp, surely a more irrational foot covering never was invented. Yet the cowboy wears this sort of boot, and has worn it for a generation. His ideas of "style" oblige him to cling to these peculiar boots, and to be particular in the make of these as well as in the fabric of his hats and gloves. For the quality of his clothing he cares nothing whatever. Yet these tight, peaked, wretched cowboy boots have a great significance of their own, and may indeed be called insignia of a calling. There is no prouder soul on earth than the cowboy. He is proud that he is a horseman, and he has a contempt for all human beings who walk. He would prefer death to the following of a plough. A day's walk through the streets of the city which he infre-

quently visits leaves him worn out by evening, and longing for the saddle. It is a saying that he would rather walk half a mile to get a horse in order to cover a distance of a quarter of a mile than he would to walk the latter distance in the first place. The cowboy does not walk, and he is proud of the fact. On foot in his stumpy, tight-toed boots he is lost. But he wishes you to understand that he never is on foot. And if you ride beside him and watch his seat in the big cow saddle you will find that his high and narrow heels prevent the slipping forward of the foot in the stirrup, into which he jams his feet nearly full length. If there is a fall, the cowboy's foot never hangs in the stirrup. So he finds his little boots not so unserviceable, and retains them as a matter of pride. Boots made for the cowboy trade sometimes have fancy tops of bright-coloured leather. The Lone Star of Texas is not infrequent in their ornamentation.

The curious pride of the horseman nearly always extends also to his gloves. The cowboy is very careful in the selection of his gloves. The Ishmaelite clothier who sells him shoddy stuffs at outrageous prices in his clothing knows better than to offer the range rider sheepskin in his gloves. You will be unable also to find these gloves in the Eastern cities. The proper glove will be made of the finest buckskin, which will not be injured by wetting. It will probably be tanned white and cut with a deep cuff or gauntlet, from which will hang a little fringe. The fluttering of little bits and things in the wind when at full speed of horseback was always one of the curious Western notions which were slow of change.

The hat of the cowboy is one of the typical and striking features of his costume, and one upon which he always bestows the greatest of care. The tender-

foot is known upon the range by his hat. He thinks it correct to wear a wide white hat, and so buys one for a couple of dollars. He is pained and grieved to find that at the ranch he is derided for wearing a "wool hat," and he is still more discontented with his head covering when he finds that the first heavy rain has caused it to lop down and lose all its shape. The cowboy riding by his side wears a heavy white felt hat with a heavy leather band buckled about it, which perhaps he bought five years before at a cost of fifteen or twenty dollars; but he refers with pride to the fact that it is a "genuwine Stetson, an' a shore good un." There has been no head covering devised so suitable as this for the uses of the plains. The heavy boardlike felt is practically indestructible. The brim flaps a little, and in time comes to be turned up, and possibly held fast to the crown by means of a thong. The cowpuncher may stiffen the brim by passing a thong through a series of holes pierced through the outer edge. The heavy texture of this felt repels the blazing rays of the sun better than any helmet. There are no recorded cases of sunstroke on the range. The record might be different were straw hats or "derbys" substituted for the rational headgear which for so long has been the accepted thing in the cowboy country. The cowboy can depend upon his hat at all seasons. In the rain it is an umbrella. In the sun it is a shade and a safeguard. At night, if he sleeps cold, he can place it beneath his hips, and in the winter he can tie it down about his ears with his handkerchief, thus escaping the frostbite which sometimes assails tenderfeet who rely upon the best of caps with ear-flaps. A derby hat is classed contemptuously under the general term "hard hat." Once upon a time a ranch foreman went to Kansas to get married, and report came back

from the town that he had been seen wearing a "hard hat." It required many and elaborate explanations on his part to restore confidence in him after his return to the ranch. There are many stories which recount the wild delight with which the cowboys greeted the appearance of a silk hat in a frontier town where they and the owner of such hat happened to be sojourning together, and it is literally true that in the earlier days of the frontier such hats were often shot "full of holes" by cowpunchers who did not wait for the removal of the hat from the owner's head. These stories date to the wilder days of the cattle towns, when one of the favourite amusements of the wild range men was to induce some tenderfoot to dance for them by means of the persuasive argument of shooting into the ground close to his feet. Such times passed away long ago. To-day there are many gray-headed cowboys on the range who solemnly deny that they ever did exist.

A starched collar was never seen on the cow range, and it is matter of doubt what might occur to it were it attempted by one of the cowboys of a ranch. The wearer would probably soon find himself the possessor of some nickname which would cling to him for the rest of his life with annoying adhesiveness. The neckwear of the cowboy is to-day what it was decades ago. The loose shirt collar has loosely thrown about it a silk kerchief, which may rest about the neck quite above the shirt collar. The kerchief is tied in a hard knot in front, and can hardly be said to be devoted to the uses of a neck scarf, yet it will be found a great comfort to the back of one's neck when riding in a hot wind. The cowboy very probably wears the kerchief in his peculiar fashion out of deference to the conventional style of the range. It is sure to be of

some bright colour, usually red, for these strong and barbarous natures have learned no admiration for the degenerate colours, such as pale green and the like.

A peculiar and distinctive feature of the cowboy's costume is his "chaps" (*chaparéjos*). Here the inexperienced man might think he had found ground to twit the cowpuncher with affectation, for the heavy, wide-legged and deeply fringed leg covers certainly do have rather a wild look. The "chaps" are simply two very wide and full-length trouser-legs made of heavy calfskin, and connected by a narrow belt or strap. They are cut away entirely at front and back, so that they cover only the thigh and lower legs, and do not heat the body as a full leather garment would. They are loose, roomy, and airy, and not in the least binding or confining to the limb, for the cowboy wears no tight thing about him except his boots. The usefulness of the "chaps" can be very quickly and thoroughly learned by any one who rides with a cowboy for a single day over the ordinary country of the range. They are not intended for warmth at all, but simply as a protection against branches, thorns, briers, and the like, being as serviceable among the willow switches and sage brush of the North as against the mesquite and cactus chaparral of the South. The invention, of course, came from the old Spaniards, who gave us all the essential ideas of the cattle trade. In the country where *chaparéjos* were first worn the cactus, the Spanish bayonet, and all the steellike hooks and whips of the chaparral make a continual menace to the horseman. The hunter in following the hounds in that Southwestern country has perhaps at times found himself in the middle of a dense growth of cacti which reached higher than his head as he sat in the saddle. To turn in any direction seemed impossible, and every

movement of the horse brought fresh thorns against the unprotected legs of the rider. Well for him then had his legs been incased in the "chaps" he should have worn. Not even the best tanned calfskin always serves to turn the thorns and daggers of the cactus. Sometimes there is seen, more often upon the southern range, a cowboy wearing "chaps" made of skins tanned with the hair on. These appendages, with their long shaggy covering of black or white hair, would again tempt the inexperienced to twit the cowboy with affectation, but once more he would be wrong. The cowboy of the Southwest long ago learned that goatskin left with the hair on would turn the cactus thorns better than any other material.

The overcoat of the cowboy, or rather his overcoat and mackintosh combined, is the ever-present "slicker" which he is most pleased to wear tied behind him at the thongs of his saddle. This garment is an oil-skin, similar to that used by fishermen on the sea-coast. It is cheap, almost indestructible, and exactly suited to its uses.

At times in the winter time, and in a colder country, the cowboy slips on a blanket coat, a long garment of heavy brown canvas lined with flannel. These coats, in a better grade, however, than is usually found upon the cow range, are issued by the Government to the soldiers at the Northern army posts, and the teamsters there declare they are as warm as a buffalo overcoat. Of course, upon the range in a cold Northern country, where the thermometer at times reaches 45° below zero, the cowboy abandons distinctive type in clothing and dresses, as do all men in that climate, in the warmest clothing at hand. He will wear mittens then instead of gloves, and will have heavy overshoes upon his feet. Perhaps he will take to the heavy knit Ger-

man socks or to the felt boots of the North. In such costume, however, we do not find the cowpuncher at his usual work, and so may dismiss it as not pertaining to his dress properly speaking.

The wearing of arms upon the person is in many of the Western territories now prohibited by law, and it is no longer customary to see the cowpuncher wearing the revolver or even carrying the Winchester which at a time not many years ago were part of his regular outfit. In some of the ruder parts of the range, and at some seasons of the dangerous cattle wars, it was a matter of personal safety that required such arms and a ready familiarity with them. For instance, the laws of New Mexico required the citizen to "lay aside his arms upon reaching the settlements," and said nothing against the wearing of arms in the country outside the towns. The law was made for the safety of organized society, for the arms bearers rarely came to town except upon times of hilarity and drunkenness, and more than ninety per cent of the "killings" of the West occurred among men where intoxicants had been in use or were near at hand. Thus the notorious Joel Fowler, who was eventually hung in Socorro, New Mexico, in 1883, had been required by the sheriff to "give up his gun" as soon as he came in town, his character when under the influence of liquor being well known. Fowler unbuckled his belt and gave the sheriff his revolver, but kept a knife concealed about him. Less than two hours later, when crazy drunk, he stabbed and killed his own ranch foreman and best friend, who had tried to persuade and quiet him. The young sentiment then just growing in favour of law and order allowed Fowler his trial for this, but his lawyers took appeal and got the final hanging postponed for too long a time; so the citizens, who had

only waited for the hanging as matter of form, concluded to save expense and keep on the safe side by hanging Joel themselves, which they did, leaving him, in spite of his loud objections thereto, suspended to a telegraph pole. That was back in what might be called the old times on the range, yet even then the sentiment against bearing arms was beginning to be felt, and some ranch owners would not allow their men to carry the revolver at all. Later on, say in 1887, on some of the ranges not so wild as the far Southwestern country, there was slowly growing a sentiment against the wearing of a "gun." In 1894, in one of the wildest parts of Texas, one heard a ranch foreman say, with a noticeable personal pride, that he "never did pack a gun." The candour of this statement is open to a shadow of doubt, for that same foreman had spent his life upon the cow range, and in the old times the cowpuncher certainly did "pack a gun." Indeed, he looked upon it as a part of his dress and one of the necessities of life, and as such it should be mentioned here.

The cowboy never wore "galluses" (braces), and he rarely wore a belt to support his trousers, depending upon buttoning them tightly enough for that purpose; but he did wear a belt, this the wide, heavy leather belt that carried his pistol holster. This belt had loops for half a hundred cartridges, and the total weight of the affair, gun and all, was several pounds. No pistol of less than .44 calibre was tolerated on the range, the solid framed .45 being the one almost universally used. The length of the barrel of this arm was eight inches, and it shot a rifle cartridge of forty grains of powder and a blunt-ended bullet that made a terrible missile. In the shooting affairs of the West some one nearly always got killed, because the

weapons used were really deadly ones. The tenderfoot who brought the little .32 pistol of the "States" to the range was laughed at till he threw it away. Thereupon the tenderfoot bought a .45, and was very wretched. He found the heavy thing almost unsupportable in its constant dragging down, and he could never get at it when he wished to practise on a prairie dog. He buckled the belt tightly about his waist, and perhaps decorated himself with one of the useless sharp-pointed knives which, for some inscrutable reason, have always had a place and a sale in the Eastern sporting-goods shops under the name of "hunting knives," though they are scorned by any man who really hunts or who has ever lived in the West. If our tenderfoot would study the belt of the cowpuncher he might learn something to his benefit. He would, of course, see no knife there. The foreman has a clasp knife at the branding corral for purposes connected with his work, but the cowboy has none at his belt. The belt itself is not buckled about his waist at all, but is worn loose, resting upon the point of the hip on the left side, and hanging low down upon the hip on the right side, none of the weight of the gun coming upon the soft parts of the abdomen at all. In riding, a cowpuncher's gun is no incumbrance to him, and he gives it no more thought than a well-dressed man does his necktie. Yet quicker than the latter citizen could jerk loose his tie the cowpuncher can jerk loose his gun. Knowing the value of time and the danger of overshooting in a little affair, he will begin to "set the gun agoing" as soon as it gets out of the holster, maybe cutting a little dust inside the distance of his man, but before the second or so of the time of the shooting is past something has usually happened.

Some of the bad men of the West tied back or re-

moved altogether the triggers of their revolvers, thus simplifying the lock and making it more absolutely certain. The gun can be fired much more quickly by cocking and releasing the hammer with the thumb, all six of the shots being thus almost continuous in the hands of a trained gun fighter. The two horse thieves who were killed in lower Kansas by Three-finger Carter, after their long flight across the range from Nebraska in the early '80's, had their revolvers thus arranged. Though Carter was lucky enough to get in two shots with a Sharps rifle, which killed one and disabled the other before they had managed to hit him, he said that the "ar was plum full o' lead" while he was getting in his second cartridge. The well-founded respect which the cowpuncher had for simplicity and certainty in his arms caused him to generally reject the double-action revolver. His dependence was placed in the old-style single-action revolver, with the wooden handle. Some young and more modern cowboys sometimes "toted" guns with pearl or ivory handles, on which the head of a "longhorn" was sometimes engraved handsomely; but these works of art were not cherished in the holsters of the old-time men. The genuine cowboy of the times when some men needed guns and all men carried them, wanted a gun that would "shore go off" when it was wanted. It needed to be an arm which would stand rain and sun and sand, which could be dropped in a stampede and run over by a herd of cattle, but which when picked up would still be ready to go to shooting.

The cowpuncher wore his revolver on the right hip (if a right-handed man), and the butt of it pointed backward. The army man wears his revolver on the left side, with the butt pointing forward—about as poor a way as could be devised, though of course the

saber is supposed to occupy the right hand of the cavalryman and most of his personal attention. The cavalryman who goes on many plains marches soon learns of the plainsman how to carry his belt without fatiguing himself to death with his own weapons.

An essential part of the cowpuncher's outfit is his "rope." This is carried in a coil at the left side of the saddle-horn, fastened by one of the many thongs which are scattered over the saddle. The rope in the Spanish country is called *reata* (*la reata*), and even to-day is often made of rawhide, with an eye re-enforced with that durable material. Such a hide rope is called a "lariat" in the South. The *reata* was softened and made pliable by dragging it for some days behind the ranch wagon or at the saddle, the trailing on the ground performing this function perfectly. The modern rope is merely a well-made three-quarter-inch hemp rope, about thirty feet in length, with a leather eye admitting a free play of the noose, the eye being sometimes well soaped to make the rope run freely. This implement is universally called on the range a "rope." The term "lasso," which we read about in books, is never heard, unless in California, nor is the common term of the Mexican, "*reata*." The "lariat" is in the North used sometimes as another term, more especially to describe the picket rope by which the horse is tied out. In Texas this would be called a "stake rope." The common name gives the verb form, and the cowpuncher never speaks of "lassoing" an animal, but of "roping" it.

The "quirt" of the cowpuncher (possibly from the Spanish *cuerda*, a cord or thong) is a short and heavy whip, made with a short stock less than a foot in length, and carrying a lash made of three or four heavy and loose thongs. The handle is a wooden stick,

or sometimes a short iron rod, covered with braided leather, and a thong attaches the quirt to the wrist. The quirt is now made as a regular article of saddlery, but in the early days the cowboys often made their own quirts. The cowpuncher took to leather and rawhide as a fish to water, and some of them, especially those from the Spanish Southwest, were exceedingly clever leather workers. But they never cared much for the fancy-coloured quirts so ingeniously braided of horsehair by the Mexicans, who are fonder of display than the American cowpuncher proper. The quirt was merely supplement to the spur which the cowpuncher wore on each foot. The spur in the old days was made with a very large rowel, the latter being a great wheel, with blunt teeth an inch long about its circumference. Often little bells or oblong pieces of metal ornamented this spur, the tinkling of which appealed to the childlike nature of the plains rider of the early days. The style of spur has come down without pronounced change.

The bridle used by the cowboy—for we may as well continue to speak also of the dress of the cowboy's horse—was noticeable for its tremendously heavy and cruel curbed bit. This bit was originated by the most cruel people in the world, the Spaniards, and it has in some form retained its hold in the most cruel occupation of the world, the cattle business of the plains. A long shank hung down from the bit on either side of the mouth, and low down on these shanks were fastened the reins, with a leverage sufficient fairly to tear the jaw off a pony. Inside the mouth there was a cross bar of iron, made with a U bend in the middle. The pull on the reins could sink this U deep into the horse's tongue, sometimes nearly cutting it off. Very severe was the "spade bit," which could be forced

into a horse's mouth willy-nilly, and still more cruel was the "ring bit," with its circle slipped over the lower jaw of the horse. This savage Spanish bit went out of common use as the Anglo-Saxon cattle men came in. It was capable of breaking the jaw of a horse, and has been known to do so. More humane bits are used now than in the past, and probably horses are upon the average not so "broncho" as the original Spanish ponies. In the wild riding of the cowboy he sometimes mercilessly jerks the pony up with his terrible bit, so sharply as to throw it back upon its haunches. The horsemanship of the plains has absolutely no reference to the feelings of the horse. It is the part of the latter to obey, and that at once. Yet in the ordinary riding, and even in the arduous work of the round-up and in cutting out, the cow-puncher uses the bit very little, nor exerts any pressure on the reins. He lays the reins against the neck of the pony on the side opposite to the direction in which he wishes it to go, merely turning his hand in the direction, and inclining his body in the same way. He rides with the pressure of the knee and the inclination of the body, and the light side shifting of both reins equally tightened. A cow pony does not know what you want of it if you pull upon the rein on one side. They have been known to resent such liberties very promptly.

The saddle of the cowboy is the first, last, and most important part of his outfit. It is a curious thing, this saddle developed by the cattle trade, and the world has no other like it. It is not the production of fad or fancy, but of necessity. Its great weight—a regular cow saddle weighs from thirty to forty pounds—is readily excusable when one remembers that it is not only seat but workbench for the cowman.

A light saddle would be torn to pieces at the first rush of a maddened steer, but the sturdy frame of a cow saddle will throw the heaviest bull on the range. The saddle is made for riding upon a country essentially flat, and it is not intended for jumping—indeed, can not be used for high jumping, with its high cantle and pommel. Yet it is exactly right for the use for which it is designed. The high cantle gives a firmness to the seat of the cowboy when he snubs a steer with a sternness sufficient to send it rolling heels over head. The high pommel, or “horn,” steel forged and covered with cross braids of honest leather, serves as anchor post for this same steer, a turn of the rope about it accomplishing that purpose at once. The tree of the saddle forks low down over the back of the pony, so that the saddle sits firmly and can not readily be pulled off. The great broad cinches—especially the hind cinch so much detested by the pony, and a frequent incentive to steady bucking—bind the big saddle fast to the pony until they are practically one fabric. The long and heavy wooden stirrups seem ungraceful till one has ridden in them, and then he would use no other sort. The strong wooden house of the stirrup protects the foot from being crushed when riding through timber or among cattle or other horses. The pony can not bite the foot—as he sometimes has a fashion of doing viciously—through the wood and the long cover or leather that sometimes further protects it, neither can the thorns scratch the foot or the limbs of trees drag the foot from its place.

The shape of the tree of the cow saddle is the best that can be made for its use, though it or any other tree is hard upon the pony's back, for the saddle is heavy of itself, and the rider is no mere stripling. The deep seat is a good chair for a man who is in it nearly

all the year. In the saddle the cowpuncher stands nearly upright, his legs in a line from his shoulders and hips down. He rides partly with the balancing seat, and does not grip with his knees so much as one must in sitting a pad saddle, but his saddle is suited to his calling, and it is a bad horse and a big steer that shall shake him, no matter what the theories of it be. The question of the cowpuncher's saddle and his use of it can be covered with a little conversation once heard on the trail of a cow outfit. A gentleman of foreign birth, but of observing habits, was telling a cowpuncher what he thought about his riding and his saddle. "I say, you couldn't jump a fence in that thing, you know," said he.

"Stranger," said the cowpuncher, "this yer is God's country, an' they ain't no fences, but I shore think I could jump more fences than you could rope steers if you rid in that postage stamp thing of yourn."

The cowboy loves his own style of saddle, but he goes further than that. He is particular to a nicety in selecting his saddle, and, having once selected and approved of it, he can not be induced to part with it or exchange it for any other. He might sell his gun or his coat or his boots, and he cares nothing how many times he changes his horse, for which he has no affection whatever, but he will never part with his saddle. The cowboys who came up with the drive from the lower range in the early days took their saddles back home with them, no matter how long the journey. To sell one's saddle was a mark of poverty and degradation, and perhaps the cowpuncher felt about it much as the Spartan mother about the loss of her son's shield. No matter how dark it is when he saddles up, no cowpuncher ever gets any saddle

but his own, and should any one borrow or misplace his there is apt to be explanation demanded.

In the early days of the "Texas saddle," or the first type of the cow saddles, these articles were made in the shops of the Southwest. Before long, however, after the drive got into the Northern country, the saddles of Cheyenne became the favourites of the range, North and South, they being made of better leather. The "California tree" was sometimes used. There was some local variety in manufacture, but the saddle of the cowman remained constant in the main points above mentioned. The old Spaniard who designed it put forth many models which have endured practically without change.

A good saddle would cost the cowboy from forty to one hundred dollars. In his boyish notions of economy to want a thing was to have it if he had the money, and a saddle once seen and coveted was apt to be bought. The embossing and ornamentation of the saddle had most to do with its cost. The Spanish saddles of the Southwest were often heavily decorated with silver, as were the bits, spurs, and bridle reins, as well as the clothing of the rider; but this sort of foppery never prevailed to any extent among American cow punchers. There was one rude and wild sort of decoration sometimes in practise by the younger cowboys on the range. They often took the skins of rattlesnakes, of which there were very many seen nearly every day, and spread them while yet wet upon the leather of their saddles. The natural glue of the skin would hold it firmly in place when it dried. Some saddles have been seen fairly covered with these lines of diamond-marked skins. It was not uncommon to see the skins of these snakes also used as hat bands.

Let us suppose that chance has brought us to some

one of the little frontier towns in or near the edge of the cattle country, and that there is in the neighbourhood of the village a band of cattle in the care of the usual outfit of cowboys. Perhaps the duties of these are well over for the time, they having shipped their cattle or turned them over to another owner. It is in the evening, and the party of cowboys have concluded to come to town for a little celebration. Far across the open prairie country we may see them coming, their way marked by the rapidly flitting cloud of white dust. In a few moments they are near enough for one to make out their figures. They sit straight up in the saddle, their legs straight down, the body motionless except through the action of the horse. They are in their shirt sleeves, their hats blowing back, their right hands occasionally wielding the quirts as they race headlong over the rough ground of the unbroken prairies. Now and again their heels strike home the spurs to push on the racing ponies, which come flying, their heads low down, their legs gathered well under them, their ears back, their nostrils wide. As the wild range men come on one hears their shrill call, the imitation of the coyote yelp. They dash into the main street of the town, never drawing rein, but spurring and whipping the harder, the hoofs of the horses making a louder beat upon the hard streets. On they ride, yelling and spurring, their loose scarfs flying, but each man upright and steady as a statue in his seat. They arrive at the main portion of the town, perhaps at the central "square," about which some of these towns are built. Still at full speed, each man suddenly pulls up his horse with a strong jerk upward of his hand. The heavy bit does its work. The pony, with its head tossed high by the sudden pull, which it has learned instantly to obey, throws its weight back as it does

in the corral when the rope has flown. It falls back upon its hind legs, sliding upon its fetlocks, and coming to a stop from full speed within a few feet. Before it has fully paused the rider is off and has thrown the reins down over its head. Then, while the pony rolls its eye in resentment, you will have opportunity to see the cowboy on his feet and dressed in his working clothes.

CHAPTER V.

THE COWBOY'S HORSE.

THE earliest written records of mankind show that man was first a warrior and next a cattle man, and that most of his wars were over cows. We are told that the Aryans were cowmen by universal occupation, and it is pointed out to us that the Sanskrit word for king means nothing more than chief of cowboys, or otherwise foreman of the ranch. Our word "pecuniary" is directly derived from the Latin *pecus*, thus pointing back sharply to the time when the cow was the unit of all values. The ancient warrior of Europe paid so many cows for his wife, as the warrior of the red peoples of America pays so many ponies, or as the head men of the pale faces to-day pay so many dollars, by a slight modification of standards and customs. It needs but the most casual glance back over the history of the race to see how primitive, how strong and steadfast, have been the customs of the cattle men from the time of the Aryans to the time of the beef barons of a decade ago. Until within a very short time a cow was a cow on the cattle range, and one cow was as good as another. Surely it was a radical and ominous change which broke down so old and strong a custom. It means that the days of our Sanskrit and Roman and Western heroes, men "who fought about cows," are gone forever, and that a new time has set

on in history, wherein the money changer and the merchant shall take their place forever. Woe is that time in the history of any people.

In the ancient days of the cattle industry the same problems must have presented themselves which were offered to the earliest cattle men upon this continent. These cows, which constituted the wealth of the individual, were four-legged creatures, which could run far away from man, the two-legged creature. Man as Nature made him cut a sorry figure as a cowboy. But Nature had given to man another creature as strong as the cow, more fleet, and more courageous. This creature man took into his plans, and upon the back of the horse he at once became the physical superior of the cow. With the horse he is master of his herds. Without it he must ever have remained the hunter, and could never have been the cattle man. He could never have organized his means of increasing his own wealth or of commanding it. Most intimately blended, then, is the horse of the cowman with every movement of his calling.

It is impossible to tell beyond the stage of guesswork just at what time the first cowman rode into view upon the hot and desert plains of the vast Southwest—that lean and bronzed fighting Spaniard who had set his stubborn foot upon the virgin soil of a new continent sometime in the early and glorious day at the opening of American history. It is sure that as a military man the Spaniard knew the value of a beef herd with the marching column or at the base of his operations. He brought over cattle almost as soon as he did horses, and the one grew with the other. There is a tradition that the Spanish Government, toward the close of the sixteenth century, turned loose upon the plains of the Southwest some numbers of

horses in order to stock the country with that animal. The common supposition is that the wild stock of America began in the stray and runaway horses which were lost by the Spaniards. Be that as it may, the horse of the Spaniards soon had a better hold on American soil than the Spaniard himself. By the year 1700 the Northern Indians had not yet become generally possessed of horses, and many of them used dogs as beasts of burden, while their hunting was all done on foot. Yet at this time the Southern Indians had horses, and had learned to use them extremely well. The natural course of horse trading and horse stealing soon spread the animal all over the vast country of the West. The advent of the horse upon this continent changed the entire manner of life of the native tribes. It only perpetuated the manners and customs of the people that had brought the horse. So strong, so virile were these customs that the type of the horse itself has changed more in three centuries than that wild industry of which it has always been and must always be a central figure.

If we should have a look at the continent of Europe at the time of the wars of the Moors and Spaniards, we should see there a state of matters much as we may see upon our own cattle range. In the north of Europe the cattle and the horses, as well as the men, were bulky, powerful, and large of frame. In the south of Europe the cattle, the men, and the horses, reared in a hot and dry country, were smaller, and were lean, sinewy, and active rather than big and bulky. The Moors were always horsemen, and they brought from northern Africa with them into Spain the horse of a hot, dry land, a waterless land, where the horse was alike a necessity and a treasure. The Moor prized his horse, and so developed of him a creature of worth

and serviceableness, one which could carry an armed man all day under a tropic sun and subsist upon such food as the desert offered.

The horse of the Moor became the horse of the Spaniard, and the horse of the Spaniard became the horse of the Spanish-Indian or Mexican, which in turn became the horse of the cattle trade which was handed down along with it. The animal certainly found an environment to its liking, one indeed similar to that which had produced its type in northern Africa. The suns of the great Southwest were burning, the lands were parched and dry, and small shade ever offered. Water was rare and precious, and to be reached only by long journeys. These journeys, this dry and unfattening food of the short grasses of the hot plains, took off every particle of useless flesh from the frame of the horse. It needs moisture to furnish fat to a people, and a fat person must always be drinking water. The Spanish pony had no more water than would keep it alive, and soon came to learn how to do without it in great measure. For generation after generation it lost flesh and gained angles, lost beauty and gained "wind" and stomach and bottom and speed, until at the time of the first American cowboy's meeting with it it was a small, hardy, wiry, untamed brute, as wild as a hawk, as fleet as a deer, as strong as an ox. It had not the first line of beauty. Its outline of neck was gone forever, merged into a hopeless ewe neck which looked weak, though it was not. Its head was devoid of beauty of outline, often Roman nosed, but still showing fineness and quality in the front and the muzzle. Its head was very poorly let on. Its ribs seemed a bit flat and its hips weak. Its back was roached up forward of the "coupling" in a pathetic way, as though the arch were in sympathy with a stomach perpetually

tucked up from hunger or from cold. Its eye was not good to look upon, and its fore legs not always what one would ask of his favourite saddler. But suppose the stripping of Nature had been followed out until the bony framework of this plains horse had been laid quite bare, and the skeleton alone left in evidence, this skeleton would be worth a study. The quality of the bone of this forearm would be found dense and ivorylike, not spongy as the bone of a big dray horse. The hoofs and feet would be found durable and sound. The cat-hammed hips would be seen to supplement that despised roach in the back, and we should have offered that grayhound configuration which is seen in all the speedy animals where the arch of the back is marked and the hind legs set under and forward easily in running. Such an animal "reaches from behind" well in running, and turns quickly. Moreover, these flat-bladed shoulders would be seen to be set on obliquely, which again one asks of his speedy dog or racing horse, if he knows the anatomy of speed. The shoulders play easily and freely, and the hind legs reach well forward, and the chest, though deep enough to give the lungs and heart plenty of room, is not too deep to interfere with a full extension of the animal and a free and pliant play of the limbs. In short, the pony of the range as first seen by the American cowboy was not a bad sort of running machine. It had, moreover, the lungs built upon generations of rare pure air, the heart of long years of freedom, and the stomach of centuries of dry feed. It stood less than fourteen hands high, and weighed not more than six hundred pounds, but it could run all day and then kick off the hat of his rider at night. In form it was not what we call a thoroughbred, but in disposition it was as truly a thoroughbred as ever stood on two or four feet. Jim, the fore-

man of the Circle Arrow outfit, down near the line of old Mexico, would have told you long ago that such a horse had "plenty sand." It was very well it did have.

This was the cow horse of the Southwest, and the type remained constant in that region until the middle of this century. All the horses of the North and the East on the plains came up from Mexico and Texas on the eastern side of the Rockies, where much the same sort of climatic conditions prevailed. Meanwhile there had been another line of migration of the horse, also from Mexico, but up along the California coast west of the Rockies. There was heat and dry air and little water for a long way to the North, but at length the wet climate of Oregon was reached. Here the way of Nature went on again, and the type began to change. The horse became a trifle stockier and heavier, not quite so lean and rangy in build. The cow horses of the early trade in Montana came in part from Oregon across the upper mountain passes by the route over which the Northern horse Indians who lived close to the Rockies first got their horses. On the northern range the cow horse was called a "cayuse," a name, of course, unknown upon the southern range, where the horse was simply a "cow horse," or, if a very wild and bad horse, was called a "broncho," that being the Spanish word for "wild." The term "broncho" has spread all over the cattle country and all over the country until its original and accurate meaning is quite lost. There never was any very great difference between the horses of the North and those of the South, for they came of the same stock, bred in the same unregulated way, and lived the same sort of life. Either cayuse or broncho would buck in the most crazy and pyrotechnic style when first ridden, plunging, biting,

bawling, and squealing in an ecstasy of rage, and either would rear and throw itself over backward with its rider if it got a chance, or would lie down and roll over on him. The colour of either was as it happened, perhaps with a bit greater tendency to solid colours in the Northern horse. Bay, sorrel, black, gray, "buck-skin," roan, or "calico" were the usual colours of the cow horses. In the South a piebald horse was always called a "pinto," from the Spanish word meaning "paint." In the upper parts of Texas one often hears such a horse called a "paint horse." In the South a horse does not buck, but "pitches," which comes to the same thing with a tenderfoot. A "wall-eyed pinto that pitches" is an adjunct to be found upon almost any Southern ranch even to-day. Both in the South and in the North the horses are now generally bred up by crosses of "American horses," though this is much a misnomer, for the cow horse is the American horse *per se* and *par excellence*.

In the "States" we pen our cattle and house our horses, and have both horse and cow always at hand and under control. Not so fortunate is the cowboy with his mount. The latter is a wild animal loose upon the range. From year's end to year's end it has no care but the hand of mastery and no food but that afforded by Nature. This we shall say for the cow horse proper, and as applying to the days of ranching in the old times, before modern methods had come in. On the upper ranges, where the snows of winter are on the ground for long months and the weather is often very cold, it has long been the custom to make all the hay possible and to keep a little feed on hand for use in winter. Even in the country of the middle range, as in the Indian Nations, baled hay and oats are used in the winter for the saddle band. This, how-

ever, is not that typical ranching of the old times which will offer us most of picturesqueness and of interest. In those loose, wild times the cow horse was treated the same as the cow, with only such differences in the handling as a different nature required or necessity of the business made desirable. Both were wild, there is not any doubt of that. Jim, the cowboy who handled both, was as wild as they. Upon that time let us rather linger than upon a more degenerate day.

There is no more interesting time in which to study the business of horse ranching than just at the beginning of the great drives to the North which marked the sudden expansion of the cattle business. Such study will take us to the plains of upper Texas, for here the day of the well-conducted horse ranch began. At a time before the middle of this century, before the civil war and before the railroads, the great State of Texas began to fill up with settlers from States above it. These travelled in colonies at times, the journey being made in a long cavalcade which was sometimes upon the road for months. From the old State of Mississippi a great many families went to Texas in that strange and restless American fashion, absolutely leaving their former homes and pulling up root and branch. These families took with them their horses, their cattle, and their household goods, and the entire family of each emigrant went with him in his wagons, accompanied by all his slaves, for this was in the slavery times. One of these great parties settled at a lovely spot near the head of a clear spring-fed river and founded the town of San Marcos, which even to-day bears all the character of that earlier settlement in the names and families of its citizens. Here began some of the first experiments in grading up the native Spanish horses with the better blood of the Northern States,

more than a quarter of a century before the great and well-conducted horse ranches of the North commenced their systematic work.

One of the first horse ranches was established on the Rio Blanco about 1849 by Jim Patton, an eccentric recluse who was born in Pennsylvania and wandered down into that country and fenced a few hundred acres which surrounded a deep spring of live water. Patton began slowly, and at the time of the civil war had only a few hundred head of horses. The foundation of his herd was the native Mexican pony, which could then be bought at two to five dollars a head. Patton had a very fine black stallion, for which he always evinced the greatest regard. The horse was fed at the house, and followed his master about like a dog, and his owner made of it almost his only companion. In the rude times just previous to the civil war, when all things were much unsettled, a band of raiders—scouts, pillagers, or whatever they might be called—came in upon Patton's ranch and said they wanted horses for the Southern army. Patton told them to go to the horse herd and help themselves; but they demanded the favourite horse, and this he told them they could not have. They insisted, and Patton made some temporizing excuse, though he had resolved they should not have the horse. He called up a negro servant, and told him to get the animal and lead it to the spring back in the timber, for that he intended to kill it himself rather than allow it to be taken by the raiders. The negro did as he was told, and Patton started to follow, having his gun ready to shoot his own favourite; but as he stepped into the path to follow after it the raiders shot him in the back and killed him. They then took the horse, but did not take any others of the herd. Patton's brother came down from the

North later to clear up his estate, but the ranch was allowed to go to pieces. This ended what was probably one of the very first of the attempts at horse ranching east of the Rockies on the cow range. Another early and well-known horse ranch was the Key brand ranch of Joe Brown, and yet another and more extensive one was the C. O. X. ranch, both of these near San Marcos, and both established in the early part of the decade which began at 1850. The trail horses of these outfits were known from the Rio Grande to Abilene in the days of the drive.

In these different ranches there were several sires—fine-bred Kentucky horses of proved blood and excellence—and it was soon discovered that the progeny of these made better cow horses than the native horses. The grade horse would weigh perhaps eight hundred pounds instead of six hundred, and would have a better turn of speed and more strength, though retaining the hardiness and staying quality of the native stock. One of the famous horses taken from Kentucky to that region was known as Buckskin, and grading of that strain began about 1856. By the time the days of the cattle drives began there was well established in northern Texas a strain of cow horses which must have had superior qualities, for they came to be sought far and near by outfits going “up the trail.”

Life in those early days was very free and wild and picturesque. It was long before the day of fences, and all the country belonged to the settlers who had discovered it. The neighbours were very far away. The horses ranged quite free and unfenced, as wild as the cattle. Horses naturally band up more closely than the cattle, and this trait was strengthened by the habits of the stallions, which would drive off, each for himself, a band of forty to seventy-five (known as his

"*menatha*," this being the native pronunciation of the Spanish word "*manada*," a band or drove), endeavouring always to steal more mares from other bands. These bands would come to feed more or less apart, and each would localize itself, establishing a range upon which it could nearly always be found. The climate of that country did not offer such extremes as that of the northern range, and this in a manner simplified the work of ranging the animals. A horse never liked to leave its native range, and if stolen and taken away would often come back, sometimes over a distance of more than two hundred miles. A band of thirty-five horses has been known to break back from the drive and return home over two hundred miles in about twenty days. Much was left to this home instinct of the horses, and it was considered sure that they would range over a country not much more than twenty-five or forty miles from where they were born, if the feed remained good. Fences were therefore not needed, for fifty miles on the range is but a little way.

The men of the horse ranches joined in the spring round-up just as the cattle men join in their round-ups. The start was usually made about the first week in March in that country, and the early search was made among the hills and broken ground along the water courses. Each ranch sent a proper proportion of men, and these travelled very light. Each man had for his own saddle band only about three extra horses. The camp baggage was all carried on pack horses. The round-up party went very free and independent, as it needed to be, for it should be remembered that the animals to be gathered were very much swifter than cattle, and at times harder to control or bring to a given point at a given time. It was usually the inten-

tion to drive the entire gathering of the horse range to some conveniently located ranch where there was plenty of corral room, but sometimes the horses made these plans difficult of carrying out. The horse round-up required very much faster horses than the cattle round-up, as the saddle horse had to carry the weight of the rider and was forced to head off the bands of fleeing horses, which at times would start back exactly opposite to the direction desired. This wild trait of the horses was offset by the trait above mentioned, of keeping together in bands and not scattering when pursued, as cattle are more apt to do. A cowboy would see a little band of horses on a ridge and would start to head them around to the central body which was gathering near by. The horses would make off at full speed, and all he could do was to follow and endeavour to turn them. Sometimes he would need to run his horse eight or ten miles before he could head them and get them to "rounding up" (not "milling," as this is termed with cattle). In such a race the top speed of his own mount was tried, and no attention could be paid to the character of the ground. It is common to speak of "giving a horse his head" on such a race, but the rider who gave his horse his head in such going might not succeed in his purpose. He had to hold up his horse with a good stiff rein, keep it from running its wind out the first mile, and so growing weak and apt to stumble on the rough ground over which the run was made. It needed the best and "longest" of his own stock for this work, and of course there were favourite horses on each ranch for this work. The horse round-up was much harder work for men and horses than the cattle round-up. There were some bands of especially fleet horses which gave the utmost trouble, and perhaps several days of run-

ning would ensue before such a band would finally be surrounded and gotten under control. Only the superior bottom of the Kentucky strain would at length succeed in wearing out these fugitives, though sooner or later the perseverance of the riders got them all in. It was a singular fact that the little colts, some not more than a week or two old, were the swiftest of the band, and these always were in the lead, the colt usually running ahead of its mother.

As the horses were picked up on the round-up here and there over the country they were driven toward some convenient corral or meantime held under herd. It was the custom in that country to corral the herd at night and to herd it during the daytime, three or four men being set apart for that work. The herd thus grew for some weeks, being shifted as seemed necessary until in perhaps a month all the horses of the range were thought to be gathered, these, of course, belonging to various owners. Then the whole herd was rounded up at some favourable place, and the process of cutting out began, this being much as it is in a cow round-up. The owner's brand determined ownership, and the colts went with their mothers. Each man helped with the entire herd until finally each owner had his own horses all separated from the main herd. Then the round-up party broke up, and each owner drove his own horses back to his own home ranch. It might be toward the close of April when the horses reached their home ranch, a date about equivalent to the first of June on the northern range. The herd was held here as it had been on the round-up in the big ranch corrals, feeding under guard during the day and confined in the corrals at night.

Upon the arrival at the ranch of the season's product of horses, the horse rancher at once went about

branding his young stock. The branding was all done in the "round pen," as a circular corral was called in the South. This was an inclosure with fence walls ten or twelve feet in height, strongly built, and, as the name indicated, of circular form. A horse when frightened is far worse than a steer, and if any angles were left in the corral it might result in injury to the horses, which when pursued by the ropers were sometimes very wild in their attempts at escape. A little bunch of fifteen or twenty horses were driven into the round pen at once, and then the ropers went to work. These, of course, were cowboys of the same sort as those of the cattle ranches. It may have been upon a horse ranch that our foreman Jim had his first education as a roper, under the tutelage of some swarthy Mexican of high straw hat and kerchief bound about his forehead, who perhaps made a prominent figure in the round pen at the horse ranch when the spring branding was in progress. It was Jim, or Manuel, or José who dashed after the flying horses as they sped about the smooth walls, his hide lariat hissing about his head with the turn of his wrist as he rode. With the swoop of the rope and its louder hiss as it cut through the air even against the sharpest wind, some luckless little colt was sure to get its first lesson in the domination of mankind. The roper caught the colt by the fore feet, not by the hind feet as the calves are usually roped, and of course at the instant the rope tightened the colt went head over heels on the ground: lesson No. 1 of the cow pony, which is not to "run against rope."

At once the colt was dragged to the gate of the round pen, where just outside a fire was burning and an iron glowing for his tender hide. A hissing of hair and a plaintive scream from the colt and it was

all over, and another animal had become the property of the ranch. Perhaps a dozen and a half of colts would be branded and marked in an hour, and then another bunch was brought in from the big corral. Cattle were not customarily branded in the corral but upon the range, while horses were always taken to the corrals for this work. After the branding the colts had little attention except now and then a rude examination to see that worms had not gotten into the burned spot on the shoulder or hip. The brand mark was sore for a week or so, but in about fifteen days it would heal and peel off and give no further inconvenience. At the same time as the branding of colts progressed the yearlings and two-year-olds received such attention as seemed necessary, and the herd was looked over for any stock which for any reason it was desired to hold out. By the end of April or middle of May the horse rancher could tell what had been his year's profits or losses in stock.

The loss of horses on the Southern ranges was mainly from scarcity of water or through drought that cut down the feed too closely. Some animals would be bogged down and lost in that way. The "brand blotters" and horse thieves would get a few, and the wolves and cougars would get a few colts. Lastly, the wild mustangs might run off a number of the herd. A great many persons think that all Texas ponies were "mustangs," and so call them, but the rancher made a sharp distinction between his stock and these wild horses of the plains. For years they made one of the menaces of his industry, and did not all disappear from the range until as late as 1878 or 1880. Indeed, even in 1896 a few bands of mustangs were still running in the Panhandle country of Texas. These are the increase of a few individuals left from the old horse-

hunting days. The Southern rancher believed these horses to be of a stock distinct from his own, and thought they were descendants of the wild horses which sprang from the horses turned loose upon the plains by the Spanish Government. It is certain that these were swifter and warier than the range horses, for no cowboy could ever round up a band of mustangs, no matter how hard he rode. The leader of a band of these wild horses was always a stallion of great cunning and speed, often of great size and beauty. It was useless to try to trap the mustangs in any way, and they seemed to have a preternatural shrewdness at suspecting and foiling any effort made for their inveiglement into the toils. Once a party of cowmen worked all night to lay a corral fence back in a mountain pass through which a band of these wild horses were accustomed to run whenever they were pursued. The next day they were started again, and took their usual course till they came opposite the mouth of the narrow pass, when without hesitation they ran on by and did not enter the pass, thus breaking a custom which they had invariably followed up to that day, though the new corral was built far back from their sight in the narrowest part of the pass.

These wild horses could not be run down by any horses ever brought upon the range. They were sometimes "walked down" by parties of horse hunters—a wild, half-civilized breed of individuals, the fascination of whose singular calling was something never shaken off. These men would take turns in following a herd of mustangs day and night for perhaps six or eight days, allowing them not a moment's rest, until the animals would become entirely worn out and could be readily approached closely enough for roping. A few of them were at times taken by the singular method

known as "creasing," which killed a dozen horses to every one ever taken alive. The hunter who wished to crease a wild horse stalked it as he would game until close enough for a sure shot. He then sought to plant a rifle ball through the cartilage of the top of the neck, just above the spinal processes. Such a shot could sometimes be made in such way that the horse would fall to the earth stunned, but would afterward recover and be uninjured; but in the great majority of cases the horse was missed or killed outright.

At one time there was a celebrated white stallion in charge of a band of mustangs which ranged near the Big Thicket of the Blanco, and on this horse a certain famous mustang hunter, a Mexican by name of Soyez, had long set his heart. He sought many times to snare or trap the creature, but could not do so, and at length tried to crease it. Secreting himself in a tree near a water hole where the band watered, Soyez waited until his quarry came down to water, himself not scented because he was above the ground and at a little distance from the water. He aimed to strike the stallion just upon the crest, but, with Mexican skill, shot it instead square through the head. Years afterward Soyez would nearly weep when telling of his chagrin and sorrow at this unfortunate ending of his quest. This stallion was milk-white, except for a black forehead and black ears. In the year 1856 there was another one of these famous wild stallions which ranged in somewhat the same country. This horse was a pacer, and could never be urged into a gallop by any means. When pursued, he would always forsake the main herd and strike off by himself, taking up a gait which soon shook off pursuit. He was a grand black horse, and was much coveted by all the ranch men and their cowboys, and very often these would make up hunts for him, taking

stands along his known runways. But though this horse was chased for over ten miles by six mounted men in turn, he was never turned and never reached within roping distance by any rider. At length he was chased so much that he forsook his range and went over to a spot lower down on the Blanco. For two years word came from that country that he was being pursued by the cowmen of that country, but he was never taken and at length seems to have disappeared from the country altogether, perhaps at the hand of another ambitious creaser. These wild mustangs often ran off the stock of the ranch men, and even mules sometimes joined these wild bands. The ranch men hated the mustangs on this account, and were not averse to the work of the horse hunters. At times choleric cowboys who had pursued such a wild band of plains horses dismounted and in wrath opened fire from their rifles upon the fleeing herd, sometimes killing several of the mustangs from no motive except that of wantonness or anger.

These several perils of the horse range having been evaded or overcome, the horse rancher finds himself, let us say, at the middle of the month of May with several hundreds of horses on his hands. These are not "mustangs," and not all "bronchos," and not all pure-bred Texas stock. Some of them are pure Texas or Spanish, and some are grades. All are wild as deer, and every one of them will "pitch" as sure as that he will breathe, for it is said that no horse was ever born on Texas soil which would not buck at some time or other of his career. The rancher sometimes sold his saddle stock as it stood, untrained and untamed, but the regular horse ranchers usually sold nothing but broken horses, as they got a better price for that class of stock. The process of breaking the young

horses for the saddle occupied the great part of the entire summer after the round-up and the branding, and this branch of the work was one of the most picturesque and exciting phases of life on the cattle range. No better riders were ever turned out than those who were raised on or near the horse ranches, for there the business of riding wild horses went on for nearly half the year.

The differentiation of the cattle trade has made horse breaking a trade of itself in much of the cow country, but at first the cowboys of each ranch usually did the breaking for the ranch, with such help as might come through the services of some neighbouring rider of exceptional gifts at horse breaking. Such specially gifted men gradually became a class of themselves, known all over the range as "broncho busters," and they took to the hazardous trade of horse breaking as a steady business, usually working under contract, and "busting" horses at so much a head for all the big ranches having unbroken stock on hand. The name given this process of breaking is suggestive and not inaccurate. A horse was considered "busted" after he had been ridden two or three times under the hand of iron and the heel of steel. Out of such an ordeal the horse came with a temper perhaps ruined for life, and with a permanent grudge against all things human. It would really never be cured entirely of the habit of bucking, and was never absolutely safe unless ridden to the point of fatigue. Some of the best cow horses on a ranch will always buck when first mounted after a long rest, and some need a little preliminary training every time they are mounted. These animals probably had their first touch of the saddle at the gentle hands of the "buster," who got four or five dollars a head for proving ocularly that such and such a horse

could actually be mounted and ridden without death to either horse or man. Sometimes the event was not thus for either the horse or the man. Horses were at times killed in the process of "busting," and very often the "buster" himself was the victim. The most successful of these men, who came of the hardiest and most daring of the range riders, rarely lasted more than a few years in the business. Sometimes their lungs were torn loose by the violent jolting of the stiff-legged bounds of the wild beasts they rode, and many busters would spit blood after a few months at their calling. Injury in the saddle at some stage of this wild riding was almost a certainty, and falls were a matter of course. A broken leg or arm was a light calamity, accepted philosophically with the feeling that it might have been much worse. The life of the soldier engaged in actual war is far safer than that of the broncho buster. There is no wilder or more exciting scene than the first riding of one of these wild range horses. It is a battle of man against brute, and of a quality to make the heart of a novice stand still in terror. Yet upon the range this is one of the necessities, and those who engage in this business go about it methodically and steadily, probably with no thought that they are doing anything extraordinary, because they have never done anything else.

Between the more modern methods, such as one may see practised on Northern ranches to-day, and the methods of the earlier Southern ranches there is something of a distinction. On a Northern horse ranch, for instance, which sells sixty or eighty horses a year, the breaking is commonly done by a "contract buster." Perhaps thirty or forty horses are gathered in the big corral and are turned one by one into the small round corral, which has a snubbing post in the middle. Two

or three men rope the horse by the fore feet and throw him, using the snubbing post if necessary. He is then quickly tied up and the "hackamore," which is provided with a blind already fastened to it, is put on his head. The blind is now slipped down over the horse's eyes, and he is allowed to stand up. The reins of the hackamore are led back, and the saddle is put on and cinched up. Sometimes the stirrups are tied together, but usually not, the buster perhaps being too proud to take advantage of this aid to easy riding, though it would perhaps save him some fatigue or danger. The blind is now lifted a little and the horse is led out, the blind then being slipped down again. Now the buster comes to the horse and mounts him, the beast usually standing quietly and cowering in its supposed helpless blindness. Two other men, sometimes known in these days of modern ranching as "hazers," now mount and ride up with their quirts in hand ready to drive on the horse that is to be broken. When all is ready the buster leans forward from his seat, lifts the blind, and sets whip and spur to the horse, the assistants meantime yelling, waving their hats, and pounding with their quirts. The horse so beset is apt to be "bad" for a time, but is likely to start away from sheer fright, and as soon as he leads off the assistants leave him, and the buster "rides it out," perhaps making a run of two or three miles, and then gradually getting back to the corral again. Here the horse is again blinded, and his saddle and hackamore are taken off. He is then turned into a separate corral, as a horse that has been "ridden." Another horse is then prepared for the buster. The latter may ride five or six horses in a day, all of these operations of course being repeated until each animal has been reduced to what seems near enough to the Western idea of docility.

In the early days of ranching in the Southwest the main ideas of horse breaking were much the same as above described, but the methods employed varied in some particulars. As those were the earliest days, they are perhaps the most interesting, and offer the best field for the examination of this essential phase of ranch work.

Some of the early Southern busters were negroes, and very good breakers they made. Many were Mexicans, whose cruelty and roughness were practically certain to ruin the disposition of any horse, and who soon came into disrepute with American ranchers. Others were rough riders from the cowboy ranks, who had been riders from their youth and feared no horse that ever stood on earth. Many of them were graduated from the horse ranches where cow horses were bred and broken as a business. It is perhaps in such a school that our foreman Jim learned his splendid horsemanship, away back in the early days. In no calling known to man shall we find more of rugged, stern, and masterly quality demanded than was asked in this original school of the cowboy. In no scene of civilized life shall we find more vivid and animated interest and action than made common features about the home ranch at the time horse breaking was going on.

A horse ranch of average size would employ from six to ten men for the summer breaking season, and these would be busy from the middle of May till the end of summer. It took about a week to break a horse, and each breaker would usually handle two horses at the same time, riding them a part of the day each. After the first work was done, others might continue the handling of the horse through several weeks more, but about six days would usually fit a horse for the saddle so that a good rider could ride it; and none but

good riders had any business about the cow country. For this sort of work the cowboys were usually paid about twenty to forty dollars a month, according to their value. Some Mexicans were employed, but they were not so much valued. Of course, there were always some of the young men about the ranch who were breaking their own saddle horses for themselves. Such horses were not run with the band, but usually kept up about the house. It was a notorious fact that one of the "pet horses" was sure to be about the worst case of the lot when it came to riding it, especially if it had been allowed to go late in life before it was ridden.

Any visitor to a cow ranch has seen the men at work among the horse herd, and has noticed how quickly a horse will stop as soon as it feels the rope touch it, even though it may perhaps not be caught by the noose at all. This submission to the magic of the rope is a cardinal principle in that horse's ideas of common sense. He bears deep within his mind the early lessons of his youth. The wildest broncho is very apt to cool down when he feels the iron grip of the rope. The first lesson of the rope he receives, as above mentioned, when a brawny cow puncher circles both his fore legs with a noose of this dreaded rope, throws him flat with a turn of the wrist, and hales him on his side through the dust away from his mother's side to the spot where the fiery iron is waiting. From that instant the colt hates man and all his doing. He hates the rope. He resolves that if ever he gets a fair chance he will break that rope into a thousand fragments. He is a couple of seasons older and bigger and stronger when he is at length driven into the round pen some fresh spring morning, so strong, he is sure, that he can rend any rope. He breaks into a run about the wall of the corral, but Jim, the lean and sinewy rider on

the older cow horse, follows, about his head curling always that unpleasant snakelike thing the pony remembers and has hated from his babyhood. The rope comes at him with a wide curling sweep, and, in spite of his tossing and plunging, settles fair about his neck or fore feet. It tightens with a jerk. The old horse which Jim is riding stops in his stride and falls back, bracing his fore legs firmly. The young wild horse which was determined to break the rope finds himself upside down, the rope perhaps choking the life out of him. He has had lesson No. 2.

Jim, the cowpuncher and horse breaker, calmly waits till the young horse's eyes nearly start out of his head, and then signs to his assistants, who loosen the rope just in time to save the pony's life. The latter is furious at the indignity he has suffered, and as soon as he can breathe begins to plunge and kick and rear, throwing himself quite over in his struggles. Yet quietly he is pulled up, pulled down, pulled along, until he is ready for another lesson.

Upon the head of the horse now ready for breaking there is slipped a curious bitless bridle, or halter, of strands of rope, very strong and capable of being so arranged that too much pulling on it will close it fast upon a pony's nose and make the act of breathing difficult. This halter is called a "hackamore," and of course it was the invention of the Spaniard. The pony when put on the hackamore is staked out on the open ground on a long "stake rope." He is left alone for awhile here, and soon learns his next lesson. Resolved again in his heart to break this hated rope, he runs full speed to the end of it, and there comes to a halt with his heels high in the air and his neck perhaps doubled under him. If his neck happens to be broken it makes no difference, for there are

other ponies just as good, plenty of them. If his neck is not broken, he gets up and does it over again, and perhaps again. Then he shakes his head and thinks it over. His next act will be to get himself tied up thoroughly in the coils of the rope, tripping himself, throwing himself, and burning his heels terribly on the harsh fibre of the rope. In this he is allowed to follow his own sweet will, because he is not intended to be used on Broadway, and a little skin missing here or there constitutes no drawback for the purposes of the range. The pony cuts and bruises himself and falls down, and no doubt reviles and swears in Spanish, but it does no good, except that ever there grows in his mind a vast and vaster respect for this relentless thing, this rope which has him fast.

And then Jim comes along after a while, with a rope or blanket or something of the sort, and begins to whip it over the back of the pony, driving the latter half crazy with fright, for never has he had such a thing near him before. The pony cringes and plunges, but Jim lays a hard hand upon the hackamore and draws him into submission and into a personal contact resented with all the soul of the fiery little creature thus robbed of his loved liberty. A second man comes up on the other side of the pony and lays hands upon him. In a twinkling a red kerchief is slipped across his face and tied fast to the side strands of the hackamore. Smitten with blindness, the pony cowers and is motionless and dumb. The end of the world for him has come, for never in all his wild life did he ere this fail to see the light of day or the half light of night, which served him full as well. Surely, thinks the pony, all now is over, and the end has come. He shrinks and does not resist the hand laid upon his muzzle, the other hand laid upon his ear, the twist given to his head,

the whipping of the blanket over and on his back, touching him where never any object has touched before. But with a jerk he may perhaps throw off the blinder of the handkerchief and begin instinctively the wild stiff-legged bucking of his breed. "He's shore bronch'," says Jim. "You'll have to hold his head closter." Then the hackamore tightens again, and the hands lay hold of the ears and the trembling muzzle again, and—and then, before the frightened and frenzied pony has had time to dread or suspect anything further, there comes a rattle and a creak, and there falls with an awful thud and crash upon his back a vast thing the like of which he had never dreamed for himself, though he has seen it upon the tamed slaves which aided in his own undoing. The saddle has been thrown upon him. Unless closely blindfolded, he promptly bucks it off again, wildly kicking into the bargain, his head tossed high with terror and hatred, his legs straining back from the iron hands that hold him.

But the iron hands do not relax. They hold like the hands of fate. The saddle is bucked off time and again, a dozen times, but it comes back again with the thud and crash, and somehow it does not actually kill, after all. The pony stops to think about it. Jim, who has been waiting for this moment of thought, cautiously reaches under the pony with a long crooked stick to the girth that hangs upon the farther side. Slowly and quietly he pulls this girth to him, talking to the pony the while. Slowly and quietly he puts the end of the girth through the iron ring or buckle. Then, quietly, slowly, Jim gets out to the end of the "cinch" as far as he can, because he knows what is going to happen. Commonly the girth of the breaking saddle has a big buckle with a tongue which will

quickly engage in the holes punched through the girth. Taking the cinch strap firmly in his hands, Jim gives a sudden jerk backward and upward, and the pony feels an awful grip of something tightened about his body where never such a thing had been felt before. At once, wild and demonlike in his rage and terror at such indignities, he falls wildly to bucking again; but now Jim is close up at his side, pulling the harder at the cinch, which does not slip but holds its own. The men at the pony's head swing down and twist his head askew. The hackamore tightens, the saddle holds. Tighter and tighter the girth goes, and at length the trembling beast feels he must endure this also. Panting and red-eyed, courageous and full of fight still, he braces his feet apart and stands so, trembling with anger and shame. And Jim quietly pokes another stick under and gets hold of another girth, the hind cinch ("flank girth," it is called in the South), and soon the pony feels upon his stomach the grip of this hairy, hateful thing, which all his life he never ceases to resent, because it cuts off his lung room and makes him feel uncomfortable with its sinking into the soft part of a pony's anatomy, which ought to be respected even by a cowpuncher, but isn't. The pony rebels again and viciously at this flank girth, but it does no good. The great saddle stays with him.

And now Jim, with his eyes gleaming a little and his jaws set hard together, slips up to the side of the panting pony, who stands with his head down, his legs apart, his eyes bloodshot, flinging his head from side to side now and again in a wild effort to break away and win back that freedom for which his heart is sobbing. Jim puts a cautious foot against the stirrup. The pony whirls away and glares at him. He realizes now what is the purpose of these enemies. Jim

speaks in low and soothing tones to him, but calls him perhaps by some such name as, "You d—d black devil, you hol' on a minute, kain't ye? Whoa, bronch'!" Again and again Jim seeks a place with his left foot. He has now gathered up into a coil the long stake rope, and this he holds in his left hand or ties with a half turn at the saddle horn. He knows there may be a severance of the personal relations of himself and the pony, and if so the rope will be needed to re-establish them. At last Jim makes a swift run, a bound and a spring all in one. Before the pony knows how it has happened he feels upon his back a horrible crushing weight. He feels his side half crushed in by the grip of a long pair of human legs. He feels his head "turned loose." He hears a long keen yell from a dozen throats about him, answered by a similar shrill yell, not of fear but of confidence, above him from this creature which is crushing down his back, breaking in his sides. All the hate, the terror, the rage, the fear, the viciousness, the courage of this undaunted wild beast now become blended into a mad, unreasoning rage. He has fought the wolves, this pony, and is afraid of nothing. He will unseat this demon above him, he will kill him as he did the wolves; he will trample him into the dirt of the plains. Down goes the pony's head and into the air he goes in a wild, serio-comic series of spectacular stiff-legged antics. His nose between his knees, he bounds from the ground with all four feet, and comes down again with all legs set and braced, only to go into the air again and again. He "pitches a-plungin'"—that is, jumping forward as he bucks, perhaps going six hundred yards before he stops for lack of wind. Or he may stand his ground and pitch. He may go up and down, fore and aft, in turn, or he may pitch first on one side and then the

other, letting his shoulders alternately jerk up and droop down almost to the ground—a very nasty sort of thing to sit through. He may spring clear up into the air and come down headed in the direction opposite to that he originally occupied, or he may “pitch fence cornered,” or in a zigzag line as he goes on, bounding like a great ball from corner to corner of his rail-fence course of flight. The face of Jim may grow a little pale, his hand that pulls upon the hackamore may tremble a bit, and the arm that lashes the pony with the quirt may be a little weary, but still his legs hold their place, and his body, apparently loose and swaying easily from the waist up, keeps upright above the saddle. Jim knows this must be ridden out.

The pony soon exhausts himself with his rage. His breath comes short. He stops. The legs of the rider relax a trifle, but the eye does not. With a renewal of the wild screams or “bawling” with which he has punctuated his previous bucking performance the pony springs forward again at speed. He stops short with head down, expecting to throw the rider forward from the saddle. The rider remains seated, perhaps jarred and hurt, but still in the saddle. Then the pony rears up on his hind feet. The cowpuncher steps off with one foot, keenly watching to see whether the broncho is going over backward or going to “come down in front,” and go on with his performance again. If he goes on, the rider is in the saddle as soon as the horse’s feet are on the ground. If the pony throws himself over backward, as very likely he will, the rider does not get caught—at least, not always caught—but slips from the saddle, jerking up the pony’s head sharply from the ground. He quickly puts his foot on the horn of the saddle, and there is the wild horse flat on

the ground and absolutely helpless, trussed up by the bridle and held down by the foot at the saddle horn. If the horse could get his head to the ground he would have a leverage, and could break away and get up, but Jim is careful that he shall not get his head down. Meantime he "quirts him a-plenty." He does not talk soothingly now. He wants this pony to know that it is better to keep his feet on the ground than to acquire the habit of travelling on his back or on his hind feet. At last Jim lets the pony up, and, much to the surprise of the latter, the rider is someway again in the saddle.

Now the pony stands quiet, stubborn, with his head down, grunting at the stroke of the long rowelled spurs which strike his sides. At once he bounds forward again wildly, repeating his former devices at accomplishing the undoing of the rider, whom he now begins to fear and dread as well as hate. The latter is immovable in purpose, relentless of hand and limb. All this time he is riding without a bridle bit, depending only on the hackamore, which allows the horse much more freedom to show his repertory of feats than does the savage Spanish bit. The pony in time grows weary, and determines to vary its campaign by a Fabian policy. Again he stops still, "sulling," his ears back, but his legs braced stiffly. Jim is talking soothingly to him now, for Jim is no cruel Greaser horse breaker, after all, and has no vindictiveness for his mount, whose breaking is purely an impersonal business matter to him. The pony at length slowly turns his head around and bites with all his force straight into the leg that grips him. The heavy "chaps" protect the leg, and the spur strikes him upon the other side. He turns his head to that side also and bites that leg, but the same process occurs again. With a sullen fear eat-

ing at his heart, the pony tries yet another trick. Deliberately he drops to his knees and lies down quietly upon his side, perhaps holding the rider a willing prisoner fast by the leg which lies under his body. The rider need not be so caught unless he likes, but it is a superstition with Jim that the pony should never unseat the rider nor loosen the grip of the legs on his sides. Jim thinks that should he do this the matter of breaking would be longer and less effective, so he takes chances and holds his grip. Were the pony a big "States" horse, his manœuvre would be effective, and the rider would be in a sad predicament; but this horse weighs scarcely more than six hundred pounds, and the big stirrup, perhaps tied to its fellow on the opposite side, is under him, protecting the foot of the rider, who is now stretched out at full length upon the ground beside the horse. Moreover, the grass is up a few inches in height perhaps, and all in all the leg is able to stand the weight of the horse without being crushed, there being no stone or stub to offer injury, and so long as that is true the cowpuncher does not worry about it. He lies and talks to the pony kindly, and asks it how long it intends to stay there in that way, suggests that it is about time for him to go home for dinner, and that he has other work to do before the day is over. If the pony be very stubborn, he may lie so for several minutes, and Jim may take off his hat and put it under his own head to make the ground feel more comfortable. Both these wild creatures are watchful and determined. It is a battle of waiting. The pony is first to tire of it, for he does not clearly know how much damage he is doing the cowpuncher's leg, and would himself prefer to act rather than to wait. With a snort and a swift bound he is up on his feet and off, his spring jerking the rider's foot clear of the

stirrup. At last he has won! He has unseated this clinging monster! He is free!

But almost as swift as the leap of the pony was that of the rider. He has tight in his hand the long stake rope, and with a flirt of the hand this unrolls. With a quick spring Jim gets to one side of the horse, for he knows that an "end pull" on the rope along the line of the horse's back will be hard to stop, whereas the matter is simpler if the rope makes an angle with the horse's course. His gloved hand grasps the rope and holds the end of it close against his right hip. His left hand runs out along the rope. His left leg is extended and braced firmly on the ground, and with all his weight he leans back on the rope until it is nearly taut. Then, just at the instant when the rope is about to tighten, he gives a swift rolling motion to it with his whole strength, sending a coiling wave along it as a boy does sometimes to a rope tied fast to a tree. This indescribable and effective motion is magical. The roll of the rope runs to the head of the pony just as the cowpuncher settles back firmly on his heels. The head of the horse comes down as though drawn by a band of iron. His heels go into the air, and over he comes, a very much surprised and chagrined cow pony. He awakes and arises to find the iron hand again at his head, the legs of steel again sitting him firmly. The pony has not known that, by this skilled handling of the stake rope at a time when a tenderfoot would be jerked clean from his feet, the cowpuncher can "bust wide open," as he calls it, the strongest pony on the range, the twist giving five times the power of a straight pull.

The heart of the pony fails at the shock of this sudden fall. His head droops. His ears relax from the side of his head where they have been tight tucked.

Through his red, bloodshot eyes the landscape swims dully. He looks with a sob of regret at the wide sweep of the prairie lying out beyond, at the shade of the timber mottes on the horizon, at the companions of his kind, who look toward him now with heads uplifted. At last he begins to realize that he is a captive, that freedom is for him no more, that he has met his master in a creature stronger in will and in resource than himself. The cowpuncher urges him gently with his knee, talking to him softly. "Come, bronch'," he says. "It's 'bout dinner time. Let's go back to the ranch." And the broncho, turning his head clear around at the pull on the hackamore—for he is not yet bridlewise—turns and goes back to the ranch, his head hanging down.

The next day the pony has regained something of his old wildness and self-confidence, but is not so bad as he was at first, and the result is the same. Meantime he has been learning yet more about the lesson of not "running against rope," and has cut his heels so much that he is beginning to be more careful how he plunges at the stake. The cowpuncher rides him at times in this way for four days or so on the hackamore, and then puts on a light bridle bit, riding him then a couple of days longer, gradually teaching the use of the bit and bridle. Then the hackamore is taken off, and the pony begins to learn that the best thing he can do is to turn at the touch of the rein on the neck and to stop at the instant the reins come up sharply. In two weeks the pony is quite a saddle horse, though it is well to watch him all the time, for he has a lightning estimation of the man about to ride him, will know if the latter is afraid, and will take advantage of his trepidation. All his life the pony will remember how to pitch a bit at times, perhaps just for fun, be-

cause he "feels good," perhaps for ugliness. All his life he will hate a hind cinch, but all his life he will remember the lesson about "going against rope," and will stop still when the rope touches him. Even if very late in life he resumes a bit of friskiness and evades the rope a little in the corral, the sight of another horse jerked end over end is apt to bring him to a sudden sense of what may happen, and he sobers down very quickly. The writer recalls a big black Spanish pony which was very bad on the stake, and had learned some way of getting up his picket pin and running off, contriving to loosen the pin by side pulls first on one side and then the other. One day he ran off in this way with rope and pin dangling, and started at full speed through a bit of timber. The jumping picket pin, whipped about at the end of the rope, caught about a tree with a sudden twist, and the horse got one of the worst falls it was ever the fortune of cow pony to experience, going into the air clear and coming down on his back with all four feet up. He was a dazed and repentant horse, and from that time on, in the words of the cowpunchers, he was "plum tender about rope."

In the breaking season on a horse ranch the education of several ponies would be going at once, and thus a half dozen breakers would in the course of the summer break in a good number of horses. Sometimes a few additional "busters" would be hired, these sometimes paid by the head—say five dollars or so a head, according to the time and locality. The close of the season would see the horse ranch ready to sell off quite a band of broken horses. These might go into the "cavieyard" (*caballada*; sometimes corrupted also into "*cávayer*" or "*cáv-a-yah*") of some outfit bound up the trail, or they might go to some other part of the

cow range. Some of the breakers would be apt to go up the trail—a great ambition among cowpunchers in the early days. Thus Jim was something of a traveller. He saw many parts of the range, and became as ready to settle in Wyoming as in New Mexico, in Montana as the “Nations.” But wherever Jim went, no matter upon what part of the range, his mount was some one of these sturdy little wild horses of the range. This horse would stick with the herd when the day herder came out to drive in the bunch for the day’s work. It would pause in its bound and throw itself back on its haunches when the rope tightened on the leg of a steer. It would stand still as though tied if the cowpuncher threw the reins down over its head and left them hanging. It would stay in a flimsy rope corral made by stretching a single rope from a wagon wheel to the pommel of a saddle. It would comport itself with some effort at common sense in a storm, though sometimes breaking out into the wildest and most uncontrollable of panics. A stampede of the horse herd was far worse and harder to handle than a stampede of cattle, and the very worst of all stampedes was that of a band of old saddle horses. But gradually the pony learned its trade, and forgot its former complete freedom in the half freedom of the ranch work. It learned to follow the herds of cattle with a vast touch of superiority in its tone. It would plunge into the mill of a round-up and follow like a bird each turn of a running steer, cheerfully biting its thick hide at every jump, and enjoying the fun as much as the rider. It would travel hour after hour across the wavering and superheated sands of the desert country, not complaining about water, and willing to make its living at night by picking at the short grass of the hard ground in the summer, sometimes living on browse in

winter, and never, in the early days, even knowing a taste of grain. (The Texas herds that came up in the early days would at first nearly starve before they would eat corn or oats). This cow horse never had a grooming in all its life, and if touched by a curry-comb would have kicked the groom to death in a moment and then broken down the corral. Its back was sure to be sore, and its temper accordingly a trifle uncertain, but it would go its journey and do its stint and take what Nature gave it. Its rough rider had small apparent love for it, but would occasionally slap its side with a rough gesture of half regard after some long ride when it stood, tucked up and steaming, panting with the fatigue of the work. No blanket ever covered it after the hardest ride, and in winter it had no shelter but what it could find for itself. Hardier than a steer, and with more intelligence, it would live where cattle would starve to death, pawing down through the snow and getting food while the horned herds were dropping of starvation all about it.

No cow horse ever attained to the dignity of a name of its own, though it might for purposes of identification be mentioned in some descriptive term, as the "wall-eyed cayuse," the "star-face sorrel," the "white-eyed claybank," the "O Bar horse from Texas," etc. Yet each cowpuncher of the ranch force would know almost every horse belonging to the outfit, and if one strayed could describe it to any one he met, and in such fashion as would enable the other, if he were a cowman himself, to identify it at once. This keen observation was matter of habit on the range, and its development was greatest among the old-time men of the open ranges.

Without the American cow pony there could have been no cattle industry, there could have been no cow-

boy. Thus the horse was the most essential and valuable property of the cowman—indeed, of any man who faced the great distances of the plains. The cow range was a horseback country. Men had few items of property, and could carry little with them. What they had they needed, and most of all they needed their means of transportation. The horse thief was the criminal most hated and despised in such a country, and his punishment was always summary and swift. The horse thief asked no mercy, for none was ever given. The justice of the plains was stern. The hunting parties who went out after a horse thief rarely came back with him. Commonly there would be a grave report made to the authorities that the prisoner had been taken, but had unfortunately escaped. Mexicans at times were enterprising horse thieves on the lower ranges. One ranch party pursued and shot four such thieves on one occasion, and threw their bodies up on top of the chaparral; yet the report at the settlement was that the prisoners had “escaped in the night from their guards.” One other party came in empty-handed, and said their prisoner had “jumped over a bluff and received fatal injuries.” So he had, though two bullet holes were found in his body by the coroner. A negro horse thief was pursued at another time, and it was declared that he had been “found drowned.” This also appeared to be true, but he was later discovered to have stones tied about his neck and several bullet holes through his body. Nothing but extreme youth could serve as a defense for the man found guilty of stealing horses. It was of no avail for him to attempt to palliate or deny. It took the early cowmen a long time to become patient enough to wait for legal conviction of such a criminal, and the delays of the law seemed to them wasteful and wrong. An old-time cowpuncher, speak-

ing of this feeling, voiced the general sentiment. "Why, h—l," said he, "a horse thief ain't folks!" In these summary trials of the plains it was very rare that mistakes were made. The same cowpuncher, for the time more confidential than his kind on such topics, where reticence was usually permanent, admitted that he was out on one round-up of a horse-thieving band when fifteen men were hung. "An'," said he, with conscious virtue in his tone, "we never did make but one or two mistakes, an' them fellers ought to a-been hung anyhow."

There comes to mind one such hunt for a horse thief, though in this case the youth of the offender saved his life. The writer was riding alone over a part of the cattle range in the extreme West, some thirty miles from a settlement, when he saw the dust of an approaching vehicle. In those times and in that country any such coming traveller was regarded with interest, for it was never known what he might prove to be. In this case it turned out to be nothing more formidable than a fourteen-year-old boy, who was driving a jaded team hitched to a buckboard. The boy was anxious and alert-looking, and held between his knees as he drove a Winchester rifle, on which he kept one hand in a manner familiar enough for one so young. He drove steadily on, and of course was not suspected of being anything more than a chance traveller in a country where nothing that one did ever attracted much attention. Some miles farther along, however, at a point where the trail turned into the rough volcanic country known as the Mal Pais, there came galloping into view a band of eight dusty and determined-looking cowpunchers, who pulled up short and stopped the traveller, asking what had been seen back farther on the trail. The description of the outfit passed fitted

their case exactly, and they said that the boy had stolen the team from a ranch fifty miles away. The men dismounted, loosened their saddle girths for a moment, and gave their animals chance to breathe, but soon were in the saddle again, and sweeping on over the hot flats on a long gallop. They caught the boy about twelve miles farther on, where he had stopped for food and water. He made a show of fight, but was disarmed. Some were for hanging him, but the majority thought it was wrong to hang a "kid," so he was set free. The cowpunchers brought back the buckboard and team, leaving the ambitious youth at last accounts on foot in the middle of the plains. His youth had been a blessing to him.

CHAPTER VI.

MARKS AND BRANDS.

LET us suppose that we have, so to speak, discovered our cowboy, and have traced rudely the beginnings of his occupation, that we have noted something of his equipment and his adjuncts, and gained some partial idea of his environments. It would seem, then, very fit to inquire somewhat of the motives and methods of the cowboy and his calling. If we have been in the least just to this rude character, we shall have seen that the foundation of his whole sense of morality is a love of justice. In that one thought we have the key alike to the motives of the cowboy and the methods of his trade. Crude and loose as were those methods, their central idea was the purpose of substantial justice, their animating and innate intent a firm respect for the property rights of one's fellow-man. Those rights, large as they were and as indefinite, were held merely on the tenure of a sign.

The sign of ownership on the cow range was as potent as the iron bars of hoarded wealth in the settlements. The respect for this sign was the whole creed of the cattle trade. Without a fence, without a bar, without an atom of actual control, the cattle man held his property absolutely. It mingled with the property of others, but it was never confused therewith. It wandered a hundred miles from him, and he

knew not where it was, yet it was surely his and sure to find him. To touch it was crime. To appropriate it meant punishment. Common necessity made common custom, which became common law, which in time became statutory law. But with each and every step of this was mingled the first and abiding principle of the American cattle man—the love of justice.

For the salient features of the cow trade we must go far back into the past, and as usual search among its beginnings in the Spanish Southwest. What, then, must have been the problem which presented itself to that old Spaniard, the first cowman of the West, as he sat a half-wild horse in a country almost wild, and looked out over herds of cattle wholly wild? He could not feed these cattle, and he could not fence them. They roamed free and uncontrolled, mingled with herds from other parts of the country which were supposed to belong to some other owner. How should he establish the extent of his just claims as against the just claims of his neighbour? Surely it must have taken even the slow mind of the old Spaniard but a moment to realize that he must find some means of pinning upon each separate animal of all the thousands his own sign of ownership, so that it should not be confused with the animals belonging to other men. But how should this be done? This sign must be something which would endure always, which neither wind nor water would erase. How could such a thing be compassed? Surely, reasoned this distant and mist-enwrapped old Spaniard, this sign must be burned deep into the hide of the creature itself! For the creature did not shed its hide. The mark burned there would always remain. Had not the galleys of Europe shown that? Had not the Inquisition taught it, and the Incas proved it in their persons? Truly the ques-

tion was solved. On each animal there must be seared this sign!

This was an idea which grounded itself upon justice—that justice in this case perhaps tempered with a respect for the knife and *escopeta* of one's neighbour. At least, our early ranchman talked this over with his neighbour, and thus they formed the first cattle men's association of the range, and registered the first brands. No doubt these primitive cowmen went at their business in a loose and inefficient way. They drove into the nearest corral all the cattle they could find, irrespective of age or sex, and, each agreeing upon what should be called his own, they began tracing upon the shrinking hides of the animals the first rude imagery of ownership. No regular stamp for the branding implement had been formulated. The only branding iron was a straight bar of iron, whose end was heated red hot in the fire and then used as a glowing pencil with which to inscribe on the living flesh the agreed emblem of title. It is not likely that the initials of the owners were the first signs used, for the old dons had so many initials and titles that the hide of an ordinary steer would hardly have served to show them writ large as their owners liked to see them. But that was a day of crests and coronets and heraldic signs, as well as a day of much religious fervour. The cross, the sword, the lance—these were things much in view in that time, and perhaps they contributed of their significance to these first totems of the trade. The circle, the square, the triangle, the bar, the parallel lines—all these, too, were things simple and not easily to be confused. Some of the old Spanish brands have hints of some such origin. They were executed upon a large scale, the expanse of hide seeming to invite large patterns for their tracery. When imagination failed a

ranchero in those days, he varied matters by a series of unique cuttings of portions of the animal's anatomy. Perhaps he cut off half an ear from each of his calves, or cut an ear off on one side and made a deep V in the other ear. Or he undercut one ear, or slit both ears, or did many other ingenious embroideries in such portions of the animal as offered him the best field for operation. He might cut a wattle on a jaw, or slit the dewlap so it hung down, etc. These marks were as constant as the brands, and of course needed to be done in the same regular fashion. They continue in use upon the range to-day. Of course, as the country grew older and more cattle came upon the range—the property of an increasing number of owners—there arose necessity for increasing variety in marks and brands, each of which needed to be different from all others, and yet simple and readily recognised under the conditions of ranch life. To-day there are thousands and thousands of such different brands.

For many generations the cattle of the prolific Southwest ran free, each bearing on its hide the sign of the man who owned it. That is to say, a part of the cattle did, for in the loose methods of the early days the *rodeo* was shiftless and imperfect, and many cattle got through year after year unbranded. Such cattle ran wild over the range, and belonged to nobody or to anybody. There was no system of dividing them out among owners. They were not enumerated or estimated or taken into account. Each *ranchero* branded cattle until he felt too weary to continue in the work, and so left it to the saints to finish, or until he had all the cattle he cared for. A cow was worth no actual price, and such a thing as a market there was not. The unbranded cattle increased in numbers for many years. Of course, every one has heard of the enter-

prising Texan of the second quarter of this century, by the name of Maverick, who made a business of searching the range for such unbranded cattle and putting his own brand on all such he found. Thus in a few seasons he got together an enormous herd, and so laid the foundation for a vast fortune. His example was followed by many, and until a time long after the civil war the "Maverick" supply was a prominent source of profit in the cattle trade. Many a young man owed his start in life and subsequent independence to this custom, which at the time was an allowable and legitimate one; and there were large herds in Texas and New Mexico which had their beginnings in such operations. At the time of the opening of the Northern ranges the Maverick industry was less profitable, but the question of unbranded cattle still remained; for, of course, in the nature of things it was impossible to collect every animal born upon the plains, and so there ran at large the unestablished title to a vast amount of wealth, whose consideration was one demanding serious thought.

Yet another question came into the early problems of the cattle trade. At times a man might wish to sell some or all of his cattle. His son might wish to marry and move away, or his son's wife might wish to bring as dowry a few cows, or he might wish to pay his wife's father a few cows for his daughter. How could such change of ownership be indicated? Naturally, by the addition of the receiver's personal brand. But then some suspicious soul asked, How shall we know whence such and such cows came, and how tell whether or not this man did not steal them outright from his neighbour's herd and put his own brand on them? Here was the origin of the bill of sale, and also of the counterbrand, or the "vent brand," as it is known on the

upper ranges (probably through the corruption of the word "vendor" or "vend"). The owner used his own brand on another part of the animal, and this, in the sign language of the range, meant, "I, owner of the recorded brand of, say, Triple Cross, have sold this animal, as see his hide, to the owner of the recorded brand of, say, J. Bar A." The bill of sale corroborated this unchanging record. It was a trifle unfortunate for the animal if it chanced to be conveyed a great many times. Some animals from the Spanish ranges in the early cattle days were covered with a medley of composite marks with which the fabled lawyer from Philadelphia would certainly have been quite helpless.

Yet another use of the idea of marks and brands came up at the time of the transfers of the great herds from the South to the North at the time of the trails. As it was very likely that such herds would suffer much loss on the way from straying or stampeding or theft, it was customary to "road brand" each animal of such a herd, this brand being the sign of ownership *en route*. This brand saved many cattle to the drovers, as there were certain men who made a business of looking up missing cattle and returning them for a *per capita* consideration to their owners.

Such were some of the more obvious and simple forms of the necessities and uses of marks and brands. Almost without further investigation one could predict the method and the system of the trade, and see how efficient though rude must be such methods, how just the results obtained by them under the wild surroundings of an unsettled region. One could predict also something of the character of the cowboy. Of all the methods of the cattle industry and of its dominating intention of justice the cowboy was the active agent. He lived his life in a high and not ignoble

atmosphere, and he learned a creed whose first tenet was the rugged spirit of fair play. The natural offspring of such surroundings was a normal and manly nature, too bold for craft, too strong for a thing dishonourable. Popular opinion, formed upon impressions entirely erroneous in the first place, clings to the belief that the chief characteristics of the cowboy were his "toughness" and lawlessness. Those who knew him were aware that his chief trait was his honesty.

But if we set so high a standard for our cow-puncher—one which is certainly not too high—let us not be deluded into the belief that the calling transmuted into metal of equal value all the material that came under it. At the very hour that the American cowboy first rode upon the stage of history there rode behind him a man almost his counterpart in the rugged qualities of the physical man, and like to him in every way except in moral manhood. As the cowboy was the guardian of herds, so was this slinking shadow their menace and their enemy. The advent of the cattle thief was simultaneous with that of the cowboy. We shall need to see how the system of marks and brands was concerned with the operations of this dishonest man.

It is very easy to see how temptation was offered to the cow thief and "brand blotter." Here were all these wild cattle running loose over the country. The imprint of a hot iron on a hide made the creature the property of the brander, provided no one else had branded it before. The time of priority was matter of proof. With the handy "running iron," or straight rod, which was always attached to his saddle when he rode out, could not the cow thief erase a former brand and put over it one of his own? Could he not, for instance, change a U into an O, or a V into a diamond,

or a half circle into a circle? Could he not, moreover, kill and skin an animal and sell the beef as his own? Between him and the owner was only this little mark. Between him and changing this mark was nothing but his own moral principles. The range was very wide. Hardly a figure would show on that unwinking horizon all day long. And what was a heifer here or there?

The cow thief was a danger to the interests of all cattle men, and the existence of a common danger suggested the idea of mutual organization against it. The cattle men's associations were a necessity, and so came early into life. To-day every State and Territory where there are considerable cattle interests has such an association, and all these are again united in a national association. These organizations are a power in the land, and have had very much to do with the development and expansion of the cattle trade. They enforce the laws bearing upon this industry, and they have secured the enactment of many salutary measures which stand upon the statute books of a dozen different States. Thus a State may make it compulsory for any butcher to produce upon demand the hide of any animal he has butchered, and this hide must show the brand mark, and he must be able to explain how he came in possession of the animal. Always this little mark of ownership is held the "best possible evidence" that the law demands in any case at bar. Altering brands was early made a very serious offence, and the occupation of a brand blotter was a risky one.

Early in the history of the complexity of range brands it became customary for each ranch to have its branding irons made of a fixed stamp or pattern, the brand being a stencil or stamp rather than a pencil or pen for writing upon the hide. This was at first

a matter of convenience, but in time became in some States a matter of law. Texas in the '70's passed an act forbidding the use of the "running iron" in branding. The ranchman who had acquired by purchase several brands beside his own original registered brand, and who was in the habit of writing his brands with the single iron as occasion required, was forced to carry with him to his work a separate iron for each brand. This, of course, was a blow aimed at the brand blotter, whose innocent single iron would tell no tales if he were caught out riding across the range. The law made an object of suspicion the man found with the single running iron. He was obliged to explain, and that sometimes before a very urgent jury. To protect their brands and regulate the handling of the increase, the ranchers of the different portions of the range very early saw the necessity for the organization of their protective associations. The by-laws of one of these great bodies (the Montana Stock Growers' Association) will serve to show the purposes of all. Section 2 of the by-laws reads:

"The object of this association is to advance the interests of the stock growers in Montana and adjoining States and Territories, and for the protection of the same against frauds and swindlers, and to prevent the stealing, taking, and driving away of cattle, horses, mules, and asses from the rightful owners thereof, and to enforce the Stock Laws of the State of Montana."

Reference to the Brand Book of this association shows that the State board of stock commissioners numbers sixteen men; that the State association has, besides its regular officers, an executive committee of forty-two men; that its membership numbers nearly two hundred; that the different brands registered by owners of the association run fairly into the thousands;

for hardly any ranch exists which does not own cattle bearing marks and brands very dissimilar in their nature. A range covered by a given rancher's cattle may have upon it a great many cattle strayed in from other ranges, which mingle their brands with those owned by the ranch through purchase. Very curious and interesting indeed are the pages of such a "brand book" of a cattle association. A page taken at random from the book of the Montana association shows thirty-five different brands besides the home brand of the owner and his "vent" or selling brand. Each of these brands is registered, and each must come into account in the cattle trade along with those of the many other cattle men of the State. Is it not easy to see to what extent has run the idea of the old Spaniard who first conceived the notion of writing his totem on the hide of his cows? Moreover—for we are concerned not so much with the cattle trade as with the cowboy who conducts that trade—is it not easy to see what intelligence and skill such a calling demands of any man? The brands of a single ranch would confuse utterly the eye of a tenderfoot; but the foreman Jim, or nearly any man under him, will in his riding over the range unconsciously record upon his mind the brand of almost every animal within his vision, and that at a distance which to the unpractised eye would be impossible. He will note the presence of a strange brand upon some animal, and will note that yet another is carrying no brand at all.

This last animal which Jim finds in the category of those met in his daily review, this Maverick of the range, still remains an interesting element in the cow industry. At an earlier day on all the ranges it was customary for any man who liked to rope and brand such animals found wild and unmarked on the open

range. Then it became customary to brand only such as were found on that country so circumscribed as to be called the individual range of such certain owner. For instance, in the waterless Southwest, the cattle were limited in their feeding habits by the necessity of going to water. The water of one ranch held its own cattle pretty well distinguished from those of another. At times the round-up in such a country was a very loose affair, perhaps only one or two owners participating in it. In such a country, if in the spring or summer after the round-up a calf was found carrying no brand, it was branded forthwith by the man finding it on his range. The question of drifts and strays was not then so important as it has since become, and the sharp-eyed cowboy who saw an unbranded animal on the range of his ranch took it for granted without investigation that it was the descendant of one of his employer's cows. This might or might not be just, but it was the nearest approach to justice under the obtaining conditions. As the conditions changed with the advent of additional numbers of cattle owners upon the range, so also the demands of abstract justice changed. Thus it is to-day the custom in a round-up district—say, of the State of Montana—to offer at sale in public auction all the Mavericks that may be found in the round-up. These are bid upon and sold at so much a head before the round-up, no one, of course, knowing how many head there will be. The amount of money thus obtained is distributed *pro rata* among the cattle owners, the sole idea being, as we have above suggested, the intention to be just to all. This is thought to be fairer than to allow each man to hunt up his own Mavericks. Diligence in the Maverick industry is no longer a desirable trait in the cattle country. On the contrary, it is some-

thing regarded with much suspicion and watchfulness, and has led to the stretching of many necks as well as many pocketbooks. The "rustler" may brand upon the range, but in many parts of the cattle country to-day the associations ask every one else to do his branding in the presence of his associates in business; this rule subject to local variations.

Thus we see that the old Spaniard's idea has travelled very far in its widened applications and its extension of usefulness. Indeed, it goes yet further in its bearings upon the trade. As the brand is lifelong in its nature, so is it lifelong in its usefulness. The beginning of an animal's life is upon the range; its end is in the markets of the East, in the stock yards of the great cities. At each great live-stock market—such as Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, etc.—each cattle association of the States and Territories where range cattle are shipped now has a special officer, known as a brand inspector, who has such help as he needs in his work. Whenever a car load of ranch cattle comes into the market, it is viewed by the proper inspector, who examines the cattle to see if they are branded in uniform manner. Suppose the brand of the shipper is IXL, and that among these IXL cattle there are found two steers branded AXL. The inspector at once asks where the latter came from, and if the shipper can not explain at once how they came to be with his cattle, he is subjected to rigid examination, which may lead to his prompt arrest by the inspector. Unless satisfactory answers can be made to such questions, the suspected animals are taken away from the rest of the shipment and sold by the inspectors. The money from such sale is sent at once, not to the owner of the IXL cattle, but in due routine to the owner of the AXL brand. The whereabouts of the latter is very

likely easily discovered by reference to the State Brand Book; but if he can not be found, and no representative secured to accept this money sent him from the inspector, the proceeds are finally given to the treasurer of the State association, to be applied to the good of the whole cattle industry of the State. Here again is a very powerful example of the idea of justice, and a very good instance of the fact that the old Spaniard builded far better than he knew.

The cattle trade with all its ramifications has never gone, and can never get any further than the possibilities of the old Spaniard's marks and brands. These tokens of ownership remain to-day the expression of a sentiment of integrity and of a wish for common justice. The outdwellers of the plains have as high a standard of commercial honour as obtains in the most intricate banking system of the cities. Not Wall Street nor the Board of Trade ever inculcated principles more rigid or of more worth. But, as a house is no better than its servants, and as no law is stronger than its executive measures, so is the cattle trade no better than the cowboy. He is its head executive and its working manager, and upon his personal qualities of hardihood and honourableness depends the success of every venture in the wild unfettered business of the range. It is the cowpuncher who first brands the calf when it becomes the property of his ranch. He is perhaps foreman of the ranch which raises it. He may pull it out of the bog hole where it would perish. He may protect it against theft. He may drive it to a range where it can better live. He is perhaps captain of the round-up which "throws it over" to its proper range if it has strayed. He may assist on the drive which takes it to the market after the beef round-up, or he may even go with it to the distant city. The

very brand inspector who examines it there as the rules of justice require is certainly no man who got his place through political preferment, but is some old cowboy, trained by long years of experience to catch quickly the brand upon any living creature. He practises his trade here in the cattle pens of the city, but he learned it out there on the range, where the earth was very wide and gray, and where the sky was very wide and blue, bending over him with even arch on each hand alike, as wide and as blue for one man as for another.

CHAPTER VII.

FREE GRASS AND WATER FRONTS.

FORTUNATE indeed must have been our ancient *ranchero*, the first cowman of the West. Before him lay an untouched world, vast, vague, and inviting. What must have been to him the whispers that came across the plains? Did the spirits say nothing to him of the mysterious, the unexplored? Did no wild bird, winging high over this calm and smiling country, carry to him some hint of that which lay beyond? Was there not some voice whispering in the grasses telling him of things yet to be? Did there not come to him out of that vague, alluring, compelling Unknown some unseen, shadowy, irresistible beckoning? We know of the tasks of those first travellers, but what do we know of their impulses? Perhaps they dared go forward because they dared not do otherwise.

To the imagination of the old Spaniard this unknown country was not a land of cattle, but a land of gold. His thought was always upon gold, and all else was incidental. He looked out over the range of these "cattle of deformed aspect," as Coronado called the buffalo, and he figured to himself that somewhere out in that vast wind-swept solitude there must lie the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola, whose streets were of solid gold, and whose edifices were all builded in that same precious metal. Coronado—bold soul!—had this

thought ever in his mind as he pressed on in his march from Mexico to the Missouri River, the first man to cross the American cattle plains. Always he thought to see the towers arise beyond, out there in the blue and gray horizon. Nay, in his dreams by night he must have seen these cities. In his dreams by day he must have seen them, rising, beckoning, eluding, evading, the wraith of his cherished hope. On and on, far across the red *mesas* of New Mexico, across the white flats of Texas, the gray plains of Kansas, he pressed, until he stood at the banks of the great Missouri, boundary to-day of the cattle range, a disappointed but still believing man. He turned back—he and all his men on foot—and crossed the great range again on his return to Mexico, seeing many thousands of these cattle of “deformed aspect,” but not finding the cities of Cibola. Yet behind him, as they had been before him, there arose and danced on the air, waving, beckoning, these cities of gold. To their beckoning have come since then the thousands of the world. The gold that built their structures lay under Coronado’s feet as he walked those many weary leagues, this glorious and still remembered soldier of another day.

All the gold of the cattle range lay before the first *ranchero*, all the untouched resources of an empire. All the range was “free grass” then, and the Spaniard grumbled because it was not all free gold. Alas! for those days, and ah! for one more country anywhere upon this globe which shall for one moment compare with that West which lay before the first cowman on the range!

For a century or two it was still free grass. Since all the earth lay open to everybody, what need to fence a portion of it? If a neighbour came from a hundred miles away, was he not welcome? His cattle would

not come so far, but would stay nearer to the range where they were born. But after a time there began to be more people and more cattle. Some strong-legged *hidalgo*, who had walked a thousand leagues or so and made some hundreds of Indian converts by the simple process of cutting off their heads, had for this high service to the Crown and Church gift made to him of some great grant of land. The sovereign granting this land to his beloved subject had no idea where it was, and neither had the subject. He came to America with a parchment entitling him to enter into possession of so many miles of land, beginning at a stone and running to a tree, and this was description good enough so long as no one cared. The *hidalgo* was pretty sure to locate his grant upon the best water he could find, for in that dry and desert country water was something of the most constant concern. The man who went on a journey took with him certain skins of water, lest he should find none on the way. A little *rio*, a living spring, a tank that never failed—these were the things which determined the locations of *haciendas* and of towns. The families which were later to be the great and wealthy ones were those lucky enough to get in upon the shores of some large river such as the Rio Grande. Less fortunate was he who had but a tiny spring which flowed a feeble rivulet over the thirsty soil.

There came a time when the cattle of some adjoining *ranch*o trampled the spring of some old *ranchero*, who in wrath laid down a few crooked cedar boughs about the spring, and thus built the first fence upon the range. As this old *ranchero* had his sheepskin grant, and as he, moreover, perhaps had a body of men trained and paid to fight for him, he was no doubt allowed to leave his fence as he had placed it, and the

cattle went elsewhere to drink. Their owner in turn fenced off for himself a bit of water, building a fine large fence of cedar limbs, bound well together with strips of rawhide. And so this went on, generation after generation, each generation needing more range and more water, though still the generous West had enough for all.

There was abundance of grass for all, but the water was startlingly and disproportionately scanty. Yet if a man kept his title legally or by force of arms to the water he had fenced, what was to be done? The cattle could go only so far to drink, and if the owner of a water front wanted all the water for himself, there was no way to settle it but to buy him out, kill him, or marry into his family—all of which methods were popular, and each of which had especial merits of its own. Water front thus came to be the one desired thing in the cattle trade of the dry Southwest. In brief, the grass was free, but the water was not free. The result was that the man who owned the water had all outdoors for his range, and needed to pay not a dollar for any land outside that along the water. No one wanted this outside land. Any one could settle upon it who liked, but it was very sure no one would like.

Perhaps there was a daughter of some *ranchero's* family who owned a mile of water front and a heart susceptible to the charms of the robust *Americano*. Some wandering teamster, perhaps a deserter from one army or other in the civil war, drifted in across this country, met and wooed and married the *señorita*, and so after a fashion got control of the water front. Perhaps the teamster sold out after a while to some ranch agent, giving at least a quit-claim deed to his shadowy rights, and moved off across the country again, prob-

ably to marry some other *señorita* at some other place. Then perhaps the ranch agent hired some cowboy or some one else who was not very busy just then to "file on a quarter" on some other water at another place, he making his claim under the Desert Lands Act, or the Mineral Lands Act, or the Homestead Act, or any other act upon which there could be hung a lawsuit or a fight. Since the only opposing title was perhaps one dating back into the impenetrable haze of some Spanish land grant, and since it was very far to the city of Washington, and since, moreover, it was a weary country, where no one cared very much what any one else was doing, the affair was probably concluded pleasantly all around, with not more funerals than seemed absolutely necessary. Thus the land agent got control of several "pieces of water," no one knowing or caring who owned the land. Then, if this were in the palmy days of the trade, the agent very likely went to Europe and sold out all the land lying between these pieces of water which he owned and which he did not own, Government land and all, fraudulent homestead or desert or mineral land entries included, to whatsoever customer he could find. It was not difficult to find a buyer in those days, for Europeans had no knowledge of this country, and were wild at the stories of the profits of the cattle trade, than which nothing ever did figure out more handsomely upon paper. Sometimes the land agent had a map of his country nicely executed. It is of record that one of the most successful of these ranch agents took over to Holland with him a finely drawn map of a tract of land in New Mexico, showing many rivers no one else had ever found, and displaying steamboats, with pretty clouds of smoke rolling from their smokestacks, navigating the waters of the upper Pecos, where really a

man could wade comfortably for mountain trout. Yet this map did its work, and made the man his fortune. Some time after he had departed, the Holland syndicate bethought itself to send over a representative to look into this land of steamboats. This representative assured them that they ought certainly to have their money back, for no steamboats could be found. It was too late then, however. The jovial inhabitants laughed merrily at the protests of the foreign customers for a cattle ranch, nor has explanation ever been forthcoming for the absence of the steamboats on the Pecos. A wealthy Englishman or English syndicate was a favourite customer for such a tract of land, and history hath not yet recorded all the frauds that were perpetrated upon foreigners under the name of ranch property in the sunny and calm Southwest. In these operations there were so many crimes committed against the United States land laws that early in the '80's inspectors were sent down by the Government, who looked into matters and uncovered a very pretty kettle of fish.

In other portions of the Southern country where also the soil was dry and valueless, vast bodies of land held under various individual or State titles were upon the market at a price of not more than a few cents an acre. Fifteen cents an acre was long thought to be an exorbitant price for land which has since then sold for many dollars an acre. Many men thus got control of large bodies of land by actual purchase. Many leased or bought large tracts of school lands or railroad lands, perhaps leasing every alternate section of the land. This latter tenure usually seemed sufficient to warrant fencing in the entire tract upon which the alternate sections lay, this keeping out other parties who did not know just what was the description of

the land. Limits and bounds were more elastic in those days than they are now, for the country seemed unspeakably large and inexhaustible. Numbers of alien landholders went into the State of Texas under ranch titles such as the above. In time there came to be trouble over ranch titles in that State, just as there has been trouble in every State where the loose nature of such titles has finally been discovered. Meantime the farming element came steadily on in Texas, and now that State is free grass no more, and the rancher must there control his holdings under some process of law.

In the Indian Nations, to follow the course of the ranch to the North, the cattle men did not have free grass, but made very desirable leases of large tracts of land of the Indians, often gaining extremely valuable privileges at a nominal cost. Later these privileges were much curtailed by the Government. The Kiowas and Comanches leased their own land direct to the cattle men. In the case of the Cherokees and Creeks the leases had to run to the United States Government, the usual form being a *per capita* tax upon all cattle pastured upon the tribal lands. But as this tax was sometimes estimated upon the cattle actually shipped, and not upon those actually ranged, the sophisticated ranchmen were able to stand the hardship. The "ten-mile strip" on the upper part of these lands, adjoining the State of Kansas, was parceled out into lots of perhaps ten by twenty miles, and leased to cattle men, who fenced it, charging up the cost of the fencing against their lease payments, and leaving the Indians owners of the fences, as they desired to be; for they did not want their own cattle running over the farms of the Kansas grangers. All the moneys of the ten-mile strip leases were applied to the joint

revenue of the tribes. The cattle men of the Nations have their ranges under fence, so that the old forms of cattle growing are there much changed, the business being more like a vast farming operation. Under such conditions all the features of round-ups, the question of Mavericks, etc., are much simplified. Yet the tenure of the ranch holdings in the Nations is a more or less uncertain thing, held in some sections only from year to year, and subject to the watchfulness of the authorities at Washington. There is no free grass in that country now.

In Kansas there is a herd law, under which the farmer does not fence his land, but which compels the cattle man to pay for any damage done by his cattle to the crops of the farmer. Naturally the cowman does not love a State where they "turn out their farms and fence up their cows," as the cattle man expresses it. This State is now largely given up to farming, though at the time of the great drives it had large tracts of free grass. Ten years after the drives the settlers had flooded all over the Government lands and left little open ground. Since that time many of the homesteads of the dry southwestern parts of the State have been abandoned, and there are some cattle ranging there without objection, though there is little left to appeal to a large operator.

In Nebraska the same herd law exists. This State was also long ago tested as a farming region, yet there remain some tracts of wild land in the western part of the State, where a great many cattle are ranged. Some ranchers there hold large bodies of school lands under lease. These are fenced, and it is very possible that there may be included in these fences some lands not included in the leases. The Western cowman has always had a naïve way of believing that everybody

wished to give him the benefit of all the doubts in the matter of range limits.

In Colorado we come again upon the dry country similar to that of New Mexico, where the question of water fronts first came up. There is free grass in Colorado, but much of it is free upon country which is of no use without water, and the best of the water was taken up long ago. Here, as also to a great extent in Texas, the cattle depend upon water raised from artesian or other wells by windmills. The best of the natural water of Colorado is fenced and used for irrigating purposes. In this we meet still another factor of great moment in the cattle questions of the day. The tendency of a country where crops can be raised by irrigation is toward small holdings, and this is, of course, contrary to the spirit of the cow trade. Yet there are many large tracts of land in Colorado which are leased or owned by cattle men.

Both North and South Dakota have herd laws similar to those of Kansas and Nebraska. Yet there are vast tracts of "bad lands" in the Dakotas which will never be farmed, and where the hopes of the cattle man for undisturbed range may flourish, subject only to the constant fear of the depasturage of the range from too great numbers of the cattle. There are bodies of Government and railroad lands in these States which are leased by cattle men, and in the wilder parts of the country the grass is free or practically free for the small rancher, though technically under the herd law. The herd law, of course, has no terrors for the man who has no neighbours.

Wyoming is now the greatest or second greatest of the cattle States. There is free grass in Wyoming and no herd law, and much of the land is so high, dry, and broken in its nature that the farmer will never trouble

the cowman, who will continue to be as he is now—the controlling citizen of the commonwealth, the enormous cattle industry overruling all others. It is forbidden by State law to fence in any of the public lands of Wyoming, though certain descriptions of lands may be bought or leased of the State and then fenced. Of course the homesteader may fence his little holding if he likes. The small farmer has made his appearance in Wyoming, and will be more and more of a figure there from year to year. Millions of acres of the lands of the State are really fertile as any in the world when only they have water brought upon them, and for some time both large and small irrigating interests have been at work seeking to increase the wealth of the State in agricultural regards. The future of the cowmen in Wyoming lies in the exceedingly uncompromising nature of much the greater portion of the land, which is too broken or too high for farming. In the Dakotas and in Wyoming the natural water is for the most part abundant enough to obviate all question of water-front rights.

Montana has also free grass for all men, and one man has as good a right as another to let his cattle run free over the unoccupied Government lands. Here the cowman has the best of the farmer, who must fence his crops if he would sustain action against a cowman for damage done by his cattle. Great bodies of land lie wild here which can never be farmed, though all the little flats and valleys over which the water can be led are now pretty well taken up by the man who irrigates and farms. (Properly speaking, the rancher is himself a farmer, though the meaning of the word has been changed by popular usage. The rancher himself is more generous or perhaps more accurate in his own use of the term. He speaks of a "hay ranch," a

“fruit ranch,” a “hen ranch,” etc.) In Montana the question of water front is of little consequence, for there is natural water enough to balance the natural grass.

In the free-grass country, such as that of Wyoming or Montana, there may be seen again proof of the cattle man's custom of respecting the rights of others. Although the country is as much one man's as another's, the man who has possession of a certain portion of the range has his rights roughly regarded, even though he be smaller in importance than his neighbour. The latter will be affected by a depasturage as much as the former, though sometimes a body of cattle is driven in and must take its chances. The new man on the range respects the lines commonly accepted by the local men as the limits of the respective ranges, and hunts about for the best place left open for himself. Of course, the future will see more and more curtailment of the free-grass privilege, especially in such parts of the country as are well watered, and all things point to the day when the rancher must control his land in such way that he can legally fence it and shut out all others.

A great enemy to the cattle trade has for years been growing up upon the same country with it and under the same conditions. At this writing this danger has assumed such proportions as to threaten the permanence of profitableness of cow ranching even upon that portion of the open range which may still be called free grass. This menace is no less than the sheep industry, itself a great one, albeit cordially detested by your genuine cowman, who has a deep-seated contempt for any one who will look at a sheep. The great flocks of sheep differ in a singular and important respect from the herds of the cowman. They can

not live unless they move. Confined on close pasture, they contract disease and die by thousands. Allowed to "walk," or range and feed forward over a great extent of country during the season, they increase and thrive. A flock of sheep starting, say, in Colorado or the Green River country, may range over five hundred miles in a year, entirely leaving their original range. Of course, these sheep can only be driven over a "free-grass" country, and on such a country they have as good right as the cattle have, though often their owners fail to enforce that right upon the range. One of these great flocks of sheep coming over the native range of a local band of cattle will eat off the grass so closely that the cattle will leave the range or starve to death upon it. This year sheep are coming in from the West in such numbers oversome of the Wyoming free-grass country that many cattle men have shipped their cattle out of the country, giving up their interests and seeking other range. Yet others have sold out entirely and relinquished the business. The farmer, the irrigator, the sheep herder have been fatal to the old order of things which obtained in the days when all the range was free grass, or even the days when the key of the water unlocked the wealth of the range. More and more the cowman himself will become a farmer, as indeed many are now. More and more the cowboy will become a farm labourer. Even to-day, in a round-up on the Wyoming plains, you may see as many overalls and jumpers as chaps and shirt sleeves. Thus, it seems, and not in garb of silk or steel or gold, are to be clad the builders of the cities of Cibola.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DRIVE.

EARLY in the history of the cowboy, as that history is popularly known, there came from the crowded ranges of the South the urgent cry for a market and the demand for additional territory out of the empire of free grass. It was in the stars that the cattle must go North. To get them North was a problem in transportation to which there could not then be summoned the aid of the railroads. The cattle must walk these hundreds of miles. Hence arose one of the most picturesque phases of the cowboy's occupation. He became a wanderer, an explorer, as well as a guide and a protector. The days of '67 in the cattle drive were as the days of '49 in the history of gold, inaugurative of an era full of rude and vivid life. Those were epoch-making times, and swift and startling were the changes which they brought. All the West was then in turmoil. The inhabitants of the Eastern and Middle States were just beginning to learn definitely of the great unsettled region into which the railroads were moving. To meet the railroads there came rolling up from the South the great herds of longhorns over the trail. With them came the cowboys, a news *gens*, reported a *gens horribilis*. In a trice the trail became one of the institutions of the West, and the cowboy became a character. Prior to the days of the drive he had existed, but he had not

been differentiated. His calling had not been specialized, he had not become a type. The trail was the college of the cowboy. In all the lusty life of the West in the old days there was no wilder and no rougher school. Out of it came a man whose rugged and insistent individuality has for a triple decade excited alike popular admiration and popular misunderstanding.

To-day the cattle drive is one of the occasional necessities of the trade all over the cow country, but it exists only in modified form. The cowman drives to his shipping point the beef he has "gathered" in his fall round-up, or perhaps he drives some grown cattle from one range to another a hundred miles or so distant. At times one cowman purchases young stock cattle from another, and these may be driven to the new range. In one way or another a drive nowadays may perhaps occupy at most a month or so. Perhaps, again, a cowman of some upper country—say Wyoming—has also a ranch down in the lower country, such as the Nations, where he raises his own stock cattle, which he wishes to put on his upper range. He is situated perhaps well up in Wyoming, and a hundred miles or so from the nearest railroad point. He ships his cattle by rail from the Nations to this railroad station, and then drives across country as in the old days. No such operations as these, however, compare in extent or interest with the old drives of the early days, when things were booming in the cow towns.

Let us suppose it to be in those early days when the herds of the South were just beginning to break from their confines and push on in their strange and irresistible migration to the North. Some rancher has learned that he can command at the railroad to the north of him a price far in advance of any obtain-

able in his own country. Perhaps he has a contract for so many head to be delivered at some Northern point, or perhaps he drives on general speculation and in search of a buyer. Perhaps he drives his own cattle, or his own and some of his neighbours', or perhaps he purchases additional numbers and thus embarks in a still greater mercantile venture. In any case the chief problem of his venture is that of transportation. The herds are to cross a wild and unsettled region, unmapped lands, with floods to swallow them up, with deserts in which they may be lost irretrievably. There is continual risk and danger of great loss in such transportation, for everything depends upon the control a few human beings may be able to maintain over thousands of powerful and untamed animals.

These wild cattle are sold, let us say, upon the hoof as they run, uninspected, at so much per head. They of course do not reach the dignity of being weighed, but are only counted. The seller may very likely see to it that his men bring in many of the poorest specimens to be counted in such a transaction, but the etiquette of the trade prevents the buyer from taking any notice of such a fact. On the range a cow is a cow, and may be worth two or three dollars. A "beef" (any animal over four years of age) is a beef, and may be worth three to six dollars. A "doggy" or "dobe" yearling (a scrubby calf that has not wintered well) is such a yearling, and nothing less nor more, and may be worth one or two dollars. It is a day of large methods, and haggling is unknown. It is jubilee for the man of the depastured range who thus finds offered him a price for cattle which have been bringing scarce enough to pay for branding them.

The riders go out over the range and round up the cattle by tens and hundreds, holding them most

of the time in the big corrals until the herd is made up and until the "road branding" is done. Then, after they are counted and sorted, the bill of sale gives the buyer his right and title and his permission to take these cattle off the range. Perhaps the great herd will number four, five, or even ten thousand head when it pulls out North bound over the trail. Another herd of this or another buyer may follow close behind it, and indeed in the height of the driving season there will be many herds strung out all along the trail.

To handle one of these great bodies of cattle the drover establishes his outfit well in advance of the start. His horses he may buy on the spot or at some horse ranch not far distant. His foreman, or "boss" for the drive he has secured, and been careful in his choice in doing so. The foreman's name may as well be Jim as any other, and it is certain that in his skill and judgment and faithfulness the owner has absolute confidence, for he is putting into his hands a great many thousand of dollars' worth of property. Besides the foreman there are a dozen other cowboys, most of them Americans, for Mexicans are not fancied for this work. In addition to these is the cook, who has nothing to do with the handling of the cattle. The cook may be a negro or a Spaniard or a "Portugee," but it is almost a certainty that he is hard-featured and unlovely, with a bad temper and perhaps a few notches on his knife handle. If he were not "hard up" he would not hire out to cook. The cowpunchers very likely call the cook the "old woman" or the "old lady," but really the language of a drive cook is something no lady would think of using. It is good times on the range, and the cook may receive fifty dollars a month and all of his own cookery he can eat. The cowpunchers will have wages of forty-five to sixty-five dollars per month,

according to their age and skill. The "cavvieryard" or horse herd will have fifty to one hundred head of horses in it, and will be under the charge of the day herder and night herder (known as "horse wranglers" in the North). The cook has a wagon or cart, which carries himself, his supplies, the bedding, and a few of the scant necessities of the men. The latter travel light as did ever any cavalry of the world. A tent is something unknown to these men. A scant blanket and the useful slicker, a flip of the roll, and the cow-puncher's bed is made. The saddle is his pillow. He may look freely at the stars. The wolf is not more wild, the broadhorn more hardy than he, nor either more truly a creature of the open air.

When the great herd of "coasters" moves out on its Northern journey its outset is attended with confusion. The cattle are unruly and attempt to break back to their native feeding grounds. The drive outfit is riding day and night, and even then its numbers and its efforts may not be sufficient. A second outfit perhaps assists the first, pushing the cattle as rapidly as possible over the first hundred miles of the trail, tiring them so that they will be willing to lie down and rest when nightfall comes. After these few days the second outfit returns to start out the next herd in a similar way. Ordinarily it may take a week or ten days to break in the herd to the trail, but when fairly started the cattle will travel ten to fifteen miles a day easily and without much urging, and in the second month of the drive will have so well learned what is required of them as to march with something like military regularity, following certain recognised leaders of tacit election. The order of march is in a loosely strung-out body, the herd in motion covering a strip of country perhaps only a few hundred yards in width, but a mile

or two miles in length from front to rear of the herd. The stronger animals, or those least footsore, march in advance, the weaker falling to the rear. When it is seen that an animal can not stand the march, it is cut out from the herd and abandoned. There are no close figures in the cattle drive.

While the herd is on the march the cowpunchers ride at intervals along its flanks, keeping the stragglers up and in as much as possible, and controlling the cattle by that strange mastery the mounted man has always had over the horned creatures of the range. Why the cowboy should be called a "cowpuncher" is one of the mysteries. The whip of the States' drover is unknown to him. He guides the cattle simply by the presence of himself and horse, riding at them when he wishes them to turn, heading them back when he wishes them to stop. Each man on the drive knows what to do, and the duties are for the most part rather monotonous than urgent. The march each day is in much the same order, the dusty herd strung out ahead, the cook wagon and horse herd following on behind. For hours and days the herd may work along stolidly and quietly, with no sound but the monotonous crack! crack! of thousands of hoofs and ankle joints or the rattle of the long horns swung together now and then in the crowd of travel. Or there may arise even in daytime that thunderous unison of the clacking feet and the continuous, confused, and awful rattling of the horns which tells of the horrors of a stampede.

By nightfall the cattle are usually weary enough to be willing to stop, and need little instruction when they arrive on the bedding ground which has been selected by some forerunner. Water they have probably had more than once during the day.* In the

* The cattle trail moved westward in Texas as the plains

evening they graze a little, and shortly after dusk begin to lie down, so that by eight or nine o'clock they may all be "bedded down" by the cowpuncher's art into a fairly compact body capable of being watched. After the cook has served his supper of bacon, beans, camp bread, and coffee, with perhaps a very few items of tinned vegetables and of course no fresh vegetables except the inevitable El Paso onion, the foreman arranges the hours for the night herding. Two to four men are put out at the same time, and these are out for two to four hours, all of these details depending on the condition of the cattle and the state of the weather.

Before lying down for his share of sleep at night, the cowpuncher takes care of his horses. This is not the act of feeding and grooming, be sure, but has

were cleared of the Indians and as the country settled up. The first trail ran to southeastern Kansas and northwestern Missouri. The so-called Shawnee trail ran east from the Red River, thence north across the Arkansas and west along that stream. The "Chisholm trail" was farther to the west, over the Neutral Strip. The "Pecos trail" was still farther to the west, in New Mexico, following the Pecos River north into Colorado, and crossing the Arkansas River in that Territory. The latter trail was used only in the territorial or stock cattle drive. There was an attempt made at one time to set apart a strip of country north and south, near the sixth principal meridian, for the exclusive purposes of the cattle trail, though this was never done. The "Chisholm trail" was laid out by a half-breed Indian bearing the name of Jesse Chisholm, who drove horses and cattle to the western parts of the Nations as early as 1840, before any one else dared go in that country. He did a good business in horses, which he bought of the lower plains Indians, the latter being able to sell to him at low prices, since they stole all their horses themselves. He often had long trains of horses, cattle, and goods, which he brought up over the best country for grass and water.

—E. H.

reference to that possession in hand which is the only concern the cowpuncher gives himself in the matter. He usually pickets the horse he intends to ride during the night, and hobbles out the one he has been using, the custom of hobbling being one brought down from the ancient plains days. His picket pin the cowpuncher carries with him, for much of the time he is in a woodless country. His horse hobbles he either ties at his saddle or flings into the cook wagon while on the march. These hobbles, as used in the early days, before buckle and chains were heard of on the range, were made of rawhide, that staple of the cow country. A wide band of rawhide was passed around the fore leg of the horse, and the ends twisted together loosely over and over, one end being left a little longer than the other. The shorter end was slit, and upon the longer end there was fastened a long wooden button. This longer end was passed about the other fore leg of the horse, and the loop for this leg secured by passing the wooden button through the slit in the shorter end of the hobble and turning it crosswise of the slit.

To guard against the restless condition of the cattle, so fatal to the success of a drive, there was put in practice one of the most curious customs of the range, and one in regard to which there exists even to-day something of diversity of opinion. The herd was rarely if ever left out of the hearing of the human voice, and it was considered a necessity at night to "sing to the cattle," as the peculiar process of vocalization was termed. The cattle when bedded down were timid and suspicious to a degree, and the sudden appearance of any strange object might set them off in a run. They might take fright at the dim form of one of the herders coming up in the night, though if

they knew it was the herder they would not be frightened but reassured, through that vague and ill-understood feeling of dependence these half-wild creatures certainly had for their human masters. The night herder in riding about the bedding ground always kept up a low humming or singing, to let the cattle know of his presence, and the cowboy who could not or would not sing was inadequate in his profession. The "hymns" were sometimes of sacred air and profane words, and sometimes of compounds of both, but it was certain that some sort of this music was in course of rendition throughout the night. When one watch went in to sleep and another set of men came on duty the new men in riding up to the cattle always prefaced their approach with this odd psalmody of the plains.

Let us suppose that our friend the cowpuncher is called from his slumbers at midnight to take his turn at watching the cattle on a bedding ground along the trail. He arouses himself from his hard couch on the ground and goes after the horse which he has kept picketed as close at hand as practicable. If the weather has been threatening, he has perhaps, in common with every other man of the outfit, kept his best horse saddled ready for sudden call. If the weather is mild, he cinches up his unwilling and sulky steed and at once starts for the edge of the herd. The air of the high plains is chilly, and a tenderfoot would need an overcoat, but the cowboy probably does not even button his loose coat at the neck, and his flannel shirt is hardly caught the tighter at the throat when he rolls out of his blankets to take the saddle. His slicker is tied at the cantle of his saddle. Sleepily but methodically he takes up his round, calling to the cattle as he comes up to the herd. He rides slowly around them, sometimes stopping as he moves about the edge

of the herd. Each gully and grassy swale, each bit of broken ground or ragged hillside is scanned closely as he moves about in the dim light. This may be country where there are men quite willing to run off a few head of cattle or to create a stampede. There may be Indians about, whose demands for toll have not been satisfactorily settled, and who are not averse to making a little trouble, even to the extent of a quiet arrow or so. Or there may be wild animals, whose presence will frighten the herd. The sudden appearance of a wolf on the outline of a hill may bring a hundred steers to their feet with snorts of terror. The sharp cracking of a twig may cause a sudden fright. It is of record that the appearance of the full moon, rising between the two peaks of a cleft hill and shining red and large over into a little valley that had been quite dark till then, once caused one of the most uncontrollable of stampedes. The aim of the cowboy is to prevent any cause of fright which can be prevented, and to give what courage and comfort he can of his own store in case any unusual or terrifying circumstances arise. Timidity relies on courage always. That thing does not walk the plains which shall terrify this bold soul, born and bred upon the range. The night has no secrets for him, nor the day any terrors. He is not afraid, and the cattle know it. He is the guard and protector, and they know it, even though they may fear him. So on and around he rides slowly, humming his little song, now a sweet one, let us hope, often not a good one, we may fear, and all the time he keeps his eyes open for anything and everything going on about him. Under the moon or the stars or the black sky, he fulfills the requirements of his wild calling, patiently and faithfully, shirking nothing and fearing nothing, doing his duty not more because he

is paid to do it than because he would not feel himself a man up to the standards of his calling if he failed to do his duty in every detail.

At daybreak the camp is astir, the men rolling out of their blankets to the cook's cry of "Grub pi-i-i-le!" The hot coffee is gulped down and the rude fare goes into stomachs well able to withstand it. Ten minutes later the outfit is in the saddle. The blanket rolls, loose hobbles or such odds and ends are tossed into the cook's wagon; the hobbled horses, which have not wandered far during the night, are caught up, and each rider saddles the horse whose turn he thinks it is to carry him, the others going into the horse herd for the day. The sun is barely up when the long line of cattle is again on the move, slowly working to the northward, grazing, walking spasmodically, stopping, or plodding steadily along, according to the conditions of grass and water. Sometimes it is necessary to push the herd sharply along to reach water, for on the trail the cattle need water more regularly and more often than on their feeding range, where the cactus may give them some liquid, and where their blood is not heated by continuous exercise. If water is found often, the cattle will drink with something of regularity of order and in safety, but if there has been a long and thirsty march there may be a horrible crowding stampede to the stream or water hole, and many of the weaker animals may be crushed to death.

There were no bridges on the trail of the old drives, and all streams had to be crossed by wading or swimming, as the case might be. Often it happened that the cattle would not take to the water, and sometimes it was hours or days before a herd could be got across a swollen river. The most difficult thing in such an emergency was to get the leaders of the herd started

into the water. Once that was done, the rest would follow without further trouble. The line of march for this indomitable cavalcade was the same in the water as upon the land. As upon the land, the cowboys in the river remained at intervals along the flanks of the herd, their hardy ponies swimming strongly under them. Sometimes in the water, as upon the land, a sudden panic would seize the herd, and they would fall to "milling" in the water, swimming round and round helplessly, to drown in scores if no remedy were found. Then again the hardihood of the range rider was called upon. Without a moment of thought or hesitation the cowboy spurred his swimming horse into the thick of the tossing heads, and by shouts and blows did all he could to break the "mill" and get the cattle headed properly. Often unhorsed and threatened with death among the plunging animals in the water, he was forced to swim out as best he could, sometimes scrambling upon the backs of swimming cattle, sometimes catching a floating tail and impressing it into service for a temporary tow. The rope of the cowboy came into full play in these exciting and perilous episodes. With it he pulled cattle out of the water or the quicksands or the mud, whether they wanted to come or not, the fierce little ponies seeming to know as well as their riders what was needed, and exerting a power which, thanks to the heavy and well-cinched saddle, was something remarkable to witness. Both horse and man had enough asked of them at such seasons of stress, and it was with great relief that the trail outfit saw the last of their herd, or at least the last of those left alive and under possession, across the stream and ready for the further march. Sometimes, at such a river as the Platte, on the north drive to the Territories, there would be a dozen herds piled up on the

river shore in a distressing confusion, from which the heart of a States drover could see no possible extrication; yet patience and courage of the cowpuncher sort certainly brought each herd out in order, with only such loss as the river inflicted. The eye of the cowboy was keen to detect the brand of his herd, and his pony was swift and the rider was tireless. So the great herd worked on, always to the North, over obstacles of every sort. In course of time the herd, dusty, footsore, perhaps thin of flesh and reduced in numbers, arrived at its destination. This might be far up on the northern range, in Wyoming or Montana, or it might be at some of the lurid little cow towns along the new railroad. Perhaps in the latter case the owner of the herd found no buyer to suit him, and very likely he lost money after all his weary effort. Sometimes it was necessary to hold the cattle on the Kansas range over winter, and indeed at the time of the feeling against Southern cattle on account of the dreaded Spanish fever which they brought with them, there was a law forbidding the importing into many of the Northern States any Texas cattle which had not been "wintered" on a Northern range, this wintering seeming to destroy the germs of that disease, which was so fatal to Northern cattle. All these problems were new ones for the Southern drover, but he and his cowpunchers rapidly adjusted themselves to the new conditions, and thus the stocking of the great open ranges of the North went on, the herds bringing with them the guardians who were to become inhabitants and citizens of the widening range.

It was a curious, colossal, tremendous movement, this migration of the cowmen and their herds, undoubtedly the greatest pastoral movement in the history of the world. It came with a rush and a surge,

and in ten years it had subsided. That decade was an epoch in the West. The cities of Cibola began. The strong men of the plains met and clashed and warred and united and pushed on. What a decade that was! What must have been the men who made it what it was! It was an iron country, and upon it came men of iron. Dauntless, indomitable, each time they took a herd North they saw enough of life to fill in vivid pages far more than a single book. They met the ruffians and robbers of the Missouri border, and overcame them. They met the Indians who sought to extort toll from them, and fought and beat them. Worse than all these, they met the desert and the flood, and overcame them also. Worse yet than those, they met the repelling forces of an entire climatic change, the silent enemies of other latitudes. These, too, they overcame. The kings of the range divided the kingdom of free grass.

It was natural enough that these wild fighting men who now made the great part of the population of the West, coming as they did from all quarters of the land, living in camps or in the saddle, living in a land wherein there had not yet been lit the first fire of a real home, and where the hand of a real woman was not yet known, should make commotion when they came to the end of the trail. It is no wonder there were wild times on the border in the days of the drive. Never were times wilder anywhere else on earth than they were in the ragged, vicious little cow town of the railroad markets and the upper ranges. There, indeed, it behooved the timid man to hie him elsewhere swiftly as that might be. Trouble came often enough when not sought for, and any one in search of trouble could find it with surprising ease. On the trail the men of an outfit usually got along fairly well together, being

held together with the friendship of common motives and mutual interests; nor did different outfits often go to war, unless there had been infringement upon rights bound to carry respect. Of course, sometimes there would be sudden affrays, and many are the unmarked graves the cattle have trodden flat along the trail. Thus, it is reported that one cowpuncher, who was spoken of as being "too particular to punch cows, anyhow," had trouble with the cook, who was a surly fellow and apt to resent any imputation upon his skill in cookery, though there seemed a general consensus of belief that he could not cook. The cowpuncher made some objection to some trifle at the table, and the cook caught up his gun to kill him for criticising his bread or beans. The cowpuncher then killed the cook promptly, and, standing over him as he lay prone, remarked, "There, d—n you, I *knowed* you couldn't cook!" In this rash act he found soon that he had committed a crime of serious nature and likely to bring serious consequences. It was pointed out to him that had he killed any other man of the outfit it would not have been so bad, but to kill the cook, even though he could not cook, was to strand the entire party out in the middle of the desert. There was a strong disposition to lynch the offender for this; but the foreman, who was a generous-hearted man, overruled the sentence of the outfit, and condemned the cowpuncher to cook for the party for the rest of the way up the drive—a punishment which is said to have brought remorse not only to the offender but all the rest of the party.

It was not often that such quarrels arose on the cattle drive among men who should have been friends, and if there was a hidden grudge it was usually kept smouldering for the time. In the railroad town,

on the other hand, a quarrel offered was a quarrel begun, and once begun it was not far to its ending. Many and many are the border tales one may hear even to-day in the flourishing little Western cities which once had the vivid honour of being cattle towns. Abilene, Kansas, was one of the most famous of these markets of the early days, and at that point alone a whole fund of yellowback literature of a too truthful sort might even now be collected. One story will serve to illustrate the conditions of those times, taken as it is from actual life at the height of the cow trails. It seems that there was a Texas cowpuncher, whose name we need not mention, who had conceived himself injured in honour by another of his profession, and who had spent the day in an ineffectual attempt to find the latter in order to call him to account. Failing in this, he at length concluded to retire for the night, and went to his room in a certain hotel once famous as a cattle men's resort. This hotel was a long building, of pine boards, constructed in the most flimsy manner, the bedrooms being built on each side of a long hall, with partitions between them of thin and ill-fitted lumber, which therefore afforded but little privacy. Everything said in one room was heard in the other rooms. As the aggrieved cowpuncher sat upon the side of his bed, he having disrobed and prepared to go to sleep, he heard voices farther down the hall, in the third room from his, and recognised the voice of his enemy, who may or may not have made some slighting allusion to himself. The offended one at any rate did not pause to consider consequences to others than his enemy. He seems to have remembered that the shape of the little bedrooms was the same throughout the series along the hall, and that the position of the bed was the same in each. He presumed that his enemy

was at that moment sitting upon his bed, as he himself was in his own room. Without further thought, he picked up his six-shooter and carefully aimed along what he considered to be the proper line to strike the man whose voice he heard. He fired, and the bullet, after passing through three of the thin partitions, struck the man in the body and killed him instantly. The shooter fled from the building in sudden fear and remorse, and appeared upon the street clad in nothing but his undergarments. He at once struck to the southward, headed for Texas in his blind impulse of seeking safety. He travelled on foot nearly all night clad as he was and barefoot, hardship unspeakable for a native rider. In the morning he met a man who was riding toward him on the trail. This man he covered with his pistol and forced to dismount and strip. Taking his clothing and his horse from him, the Texan dressed himself, mounted and rode away. From that day to this, so far as known, he has never been heard from again. In some distant corner of the cattle country there may perhaps have been a morose cowpuncher, who never spoke about his past, and whom the etiquette of the range forbade questioning as to his earlier history.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ROUND-UP.

SINCE the beginning of mankind's struggle with Nature the harvest season has been a time of victory and rejoicing. At that time man unbends his back and gives thanks for the reaping. Then come the days of final activity, of supreme exertion, the climax of all that has a material, an allegorical, or spectacular interest in the yearly war for existence. The round-up is the harvest of the range. Therefore it is natural that its customs should offer more of interest than those of any other part of the year. It were matter of course, also, that features so singular and stirring in their intense action as those of the cowman's harvest should be known and blazoned about for the knowledge of those living elsewhere than upon the cattle fields. Writers and artists have seized upon this phase of the cattle man's life, and given it so wide a showing that the public might well have at least a general idea of the subject. Yet perhaps this general idea would be a more partial and less accurate notion than is deserved by the complicated and varied business system of the cattle harvest. If we would have a just idea of the life and character of the man who makes the round-up, we should approach the subject rather with a wish to find its fundamental principles than a desire to see its superficial pictures.

The system of the round-up, while it retains the same general features over the whole of the cow country, and has done so for years, is none the less subject to considerable local modifications, and it has in many respects changed with the years as other customs of the industry have changed; for not even the ancient and enduring calling of the cowman could be free from the law of progress. The Western traveller who first saw a round-up twenty years ago would not be in position to describe one of to-day. Sectional differences make still other changes which should be regarded. Yet all these round-ups, of the past and of the present, of the North and of the South, ground themselves upon a common principle—namely, upon that desire for absolute justice which has been earlier mentioned as a distinguishing trait of the cowman and the trade he follows.

Reverting, as we must continually do, to the early times of the cattle industry, we shall find ourselves back in the days of water fronts in the dry Southwest. Here the round-up depended upon local conditions, just as it has ever since. If the *ranchero* had practically all the water near him, he had also practically all the cattle, and the harvest of the calves was merely a large going forth on his part and marking his own increase without being troubled with that of others. This feature would be apt to continue more in a wide and sparsely pastured country than in one where the cattle of many owners were mingled together on the range. Again, if we follow up the history of the range until we come upon the time of large individual holdings of land under fence, we must see how similar was the round-up then to that of the dry country; for here man had done what Nature had done in the other case, and had separated the owner's cattle from those

of his neighbours. It remained, therefore, much a matter of an individual and not a community harvest; whereas the community harvest is the one which the average man has in mind when speaking of a round-up. The free-grass round-up is the one where the ingenuity, the energy, and the resources of the cowman are best to be seen, his way of carrying out his fundamental purpose of justice to all men on the vast, unfenced, and undefined farm of the range, where the thousands of cattle, belonging to dozens of owners, each animal wild as a deer and half as fleet, are all gathered, counted, separated, and identified with a system and an accuracy little short of the marvellous. Until one has seen such a round-up on the open plains he has neither seen the cowboy at his best nor seen the fruition of the system that he represents.

The time of the calf round-up is in the spring, after the grass has become good and after the calves have grown large enough for the branding, this time being later in the North than in the South by perhaps thirty days. Naturally, upon a country where the open range is common property there can not be a round-up for each man who owns cattle running at large. Naturally, also, there must be more than one round-up to gather all the cattle over the vast extent of a cattle region. Here the system of the cowman is at once in evidence. The State cattle association divides the entire State range into a number of round-up districts—let us say into a dozen or two dozen districts. Each district conducts its own round-up, this under the working supervision of some experienced man who goes by the name of the round-up captain or round-up boss, and who is elected by vote of the cowmen of his district. Under this general officer are all the bosses in charge of the different ranch outfits

sent by men having cattle in the round-up. In the very outset of the levy for these troops of the range the idea of justice is apparent. Not all men own equal numbers of the cattle, so it would be obviously unfair to ask all to furnish an equal amount of the expense and labour in the total of the round-up duties. The small outfits send a few men, the large ones more, the aim being that of fairness to all and hardship to none. The whole force of a small modern round-up may not exceed thirty men. In one of the large Southern round-ups there once met at the Double Forks of the Brazos nearly three hundred men. All these men met at one ranch, and it is proof of the largeness of the cattle life and its methods that they were all well fed and entertained by the owner of the ranch. Nowadays perhaps a ranch of ordinary size will send two messes of men of half a dozen or more men each as its *pro rata* in the round-up, each mess with its own cook, and perhaps with two wagons to each mess to carry along the tents and supplies. In the old days no tents were taken, and the life was rougher than it is now, but of late years the cowboy has grown sybaritic. With each ranch outfit there must of course be the proper horse herd, "cavoy," or "cavvieyah. Each man will have eight or ten horses for his own use, for he has now before him the hardest riding of the year. All these horses, some of them a bit gay and frisky in the air of spring, are driven along with the ranch outfit as its own horse herd, the total usually split into two herds, each under the charge of one or more herders, known as "horse wranglers"—an expression confined to the Northern ranges, and bearing a certain collegiate waggishness of flavour, though the origin of the term is now untraceable. There are, of course, night wranglers and day wranglers, it being the

duty of these men to see to it that the horse herd is kept together and at hand when wanted for the work.

Sometime toward the middle of May, let us say, all these different outfits leave their home ranches and head for the rendezvous of the round-up. The opening date of the round-up is known, and the different outfits, big and little, move in so as to be on hand a few days before the beginning of the work. It may be imagined what a scene must be this general gathering of the cow clans, how picturesque this assemblage of hardy, rugged men fresh from their wild life and ready for the still wilder scenes of activity which are before them! There may be fifty men, perhaps five hundred horses at the main camp, and of the total there is not one animal which does not boil over with the energy of full-blooded life. The men rejoice as those should rejoice who go forth to the harvest, the horses exult because spring has come, with its mysterious stirring airs. The preliminary days are passed in romp and frolic, perhaps at cards and games. Each man, however, has his own work outlined, and makes his preparations for it. His personal outfit is overhauled and put in repair. His rope has a touch to "limber it up," his straps are softened, his clothing put in order. If he has a wild horse in his string, he takes the opportunity of giving it a few lessons of the sort which make up the cow pony's education. Swiftly the grand camp of the round-up settles into the system of veterans, and all is rapidly made ready for the exacting duties which are to follow.

The total country to be covered by the round-up is perhaps a strip forty by one hundred miles in extent. The direction in which the round-up will work will depend upon the habits and the ranging of the cattle at that time, there being no hard and fast rules possi-

ble. Local conditions determine also the location of the several round-up camps, which of course must be where grass and water are abundant and where there is room to handle the herds. At times there may perhaps be five thousand or more head of cattle in one body, though the numbers are more likely to run not over fifteen hundred or two thousand at a time. The tendency nowadays is all in favour of smaller round-ups, other herds being gathered after the first is worked, and the size of each assembling depending of course upon local circumstances. It may be better to drive in all the cattle from a large strip of country to a good working ground, or it may be more convenient to make several herds and frequent changes of camp.

The round-up captain knows the men who are to work under him, and from among these he appoints lieutenants who shall have each a certain band of men under him while covering the country. Advice is given to each party as to what direction it shall take after the start is made, all these arrangements being made so as not to give special inconvenience to the men of the respective ranch outfits, who will naturally wish to camp with their own mess wagon. On the day before the start the little army of the plains has its campaign all planned and lying out before it, and each man knows about what he is to do. On the night before the opening day the cowpuncher, if he be wise, goes to bed early and gets a full night's sleep, for not another will he have now for many a night to come. The flickerings of the cooks' fires, confined in their trenches so that they may not spread and so that their heat may be well utilized, rise and fall, casting great shadows upon the tent walls where the cowboys unroll their blankets and prepare for rest. The wind sighs and sings in the way the wind has upon the plains.

The far-off neigh of a restless pony, the stamp of a horse picketed near by, the shrilling yell of the coyote, and all those further vague and nameless noises which pass in the air at night over the wild range come to the cowboy as unneeded and unnoted lullaby. His sleep is deep and untroubled, and to him it seems scarce begun when it is suddenly ended amid the chorus of calls, groans, and shoutings of his companions answering at the gray of dawn the call of the uneasy round-up boss, who sings out his long cry of "Roll out! roll out!" followed by the shrill call of the cook, "Grub pi-i-i-le!" The cook has been up for an hour, and has made his fire perhaps of cottonwood limbs, perhaps of the *bois des vaches*—natural fuel, of the buffalo on the cattle range. This early morning summons the cowpuncher dare not disobey, for the etiquette of the round-up is strict enough in its way. It is but dim daylight at best when the camp has kicked off its blankets and risen up shoutingly. In a few moments it has broken into a scene of wild but methodical activity. In much less than an hour after the first call for boots and saddles the whole strange cavalcade is under way, and behind it the cooks are breaking camp and pitching the plunder into the wagons for the move.

Through the wet grass at break of dawn come the rush and pounding of many hoofs, and ahead of the swinging ropes of the wranglers gallops the horse herd as it is brought in for the morning saddling. To receive it a hasty corral is made, after the rude but efficient ways of the range. This corral is but a single rope stretched about the sides of an irregular parallelogram, or rather it is made of several single ropes united end to end. Sometimes the corral runs out from the wheels of two wagons, the ropes being supported at

their outer ends by two men, who swing out and act as living gateposts, leaving open a gap into which the horses are driven. The latter will not attempt to break over this single strand, though they might well do so had they not learned the lesson of not running against rope. Sometimes this strange corral is made by stringing the rope from the saddle horns of several of the laziest and solemnest of the old saddle horses, which thus serve as the fence posts, this way being more common at midday or out in the open country, where a short pause is made by the outfit. Sometimes a wagon wheel, a horse, and a man or two may all be doing duty as posts for the corral, it being the peculiarity of the cowman to use what means are best and nearest to his hand in all his operations. The handling of the horse herd offers some of the most picturesque features of the round-up, and the first morning of the round-up is apt to furnish some thrilling bits of action at the horse corrals when the men are roping their mounts, pulling them unwilling forth and cinching the great saddles firmly upon their bulging and protesting sides. In the early times the cow horse was a wilder animal than he is to-day, but in these degenerate days a wild horse is not thought desirable, and indeed many or most of the cow horses are not roped at all for their saddling. The cowboy simply goes into the corral, picks out his horse, and throws his bridle over its neck with a most civilized disregard for the spectacular.

After the handling of the horse herd and the saddling up, the little army swiftly gets into motion and wings out widely over the plains, the men sometimes shouting and running their horses in prodigal waste of energy, for all is exuberance and abounding vigour on these opening days in spring. Each little party

spreads out under its commander until each man becomes a commander for himself, imposing upon himself the duty of driving before him to the agreed meeting place ahead all the cattle that may come in his line of march. As the cowpuncher thus rides out into his great gray harvest field he sees no great wealth of horned herds about him or before him. It is a big country, and the many thousands of cattle make but a small showing upon it. Did they seem numerous as in an Eastern pasture, the range must surely be a depastured and impoverished one. Here and there, scattered about, out beyond where the horse herds have been feeding, there may be a few little groups of cattle. Out farther, upon some hogback or along the side of some *coulee*, a horned head is lifted high, gazing in astonishment at this strange invasion of the range. The animal may be a grade longhorn, though now the old Texas stock has practically vanished from the range. The shorthorn is valued, the white-faced Hereford still more popular, since it is hardy and quick to mature. All these, one by one, by twos and threes, and finally in fifties and hundreds, the keen-eyed and hard-riding cowpuncher starts out and away from their feeding ground and drives on ahead of him toward the meeting place. The string of other animals running ahead, perhaps half a mile to one side, where some other cowpuncher is driving, is sure to be noted by the cattle near to him. He gives a shout and starts toward them, and, true to their gregarious habits, they start on the run for their companions on ahead, this being just what it is wished they should do. This herding habit of the range cattle is the basis of many of the operations of handling them. Thus each little *coulee* and draw, each ridge and little flat is swept of its inhabitants, which all go on forward toward where

the long lines of dust are beginning to converge and mingle. As a matter of course, all the cattle, big and little, cows, calves, and steers, are included in the assembling, and are driven in together. The driving is not the work of a novice, but yet is not so difficult, for most of the cattle are so wild that they run at the sight of a horseman, more especially if they be of the old longhorn breed, and all the cowboy needs to do is to ride hard to one side and so direct their flight. Other cattle join those running, so that the whole horned populace goes in and along, but a small per cent being missed in the round-up, though of course it is not possible to gather up every individual that may be ranging wild and unobserved in the vast expanses of the open plains.

Thus, later in the day, the gatherings of the individuals and of the separate parties meet in a vast, commingling multitude of cattle. The place is in some valley or upon some plain offering room for handling the herd. Clouds of dust arise. The sun shines hot. Above the immediate shuffle and clacking of the nearby cattle comes a confused and tremendous tumult, the lowing of cows, the bawling of calves, the rumbling bellows of other animals protesting at this unusual situation. The whirling flight of the cowboys on their many different quests, the neighing of horses, the shouts of command or of exultation—all these wild sounds beat upon the air in a medley apparently arising out of bedlam, and all these sights arise from what seems to the unskilled observer a hopeless and irremediable disorder. Yet as matter of fact each rider of all this little army knows exactly what he is about. Each is working for a definite and common purpose, and the whole is progressing under a system of singular perfection. This confusion is that of chaos

falling into order. The guiding and controlling mind of man will subject all this mighty disorder to his own ends. These great horned creatures, outnumbering a hundred to one their human guards, are helpless to escape from the living cordon of fearless horse and daring rider. Out of the dust and heat and turmoil one gathers a single definite thought, evolves a single character. The yearly climax of his calling has brought into vivid view the cowboy in that position which shows himself and his profession in their most unique and striking form.

Perhaps a couple of thousand of cattle are gathered in this herd here upon a little flat valley a mile or so across. On the other side of the valley are lines of willows and low trees, and on beyond, in the direction of the sun, runs the shining thread of a river. Toward the shelter of the trees the thin blue smoke of the camp fires is arising. Possibly some of the cowpunchers run over to the camp to snatch a bite to eat, for the work of the cutting out has not yet begun. The milling of the cattle has thrown them into confusion, and the calves are separated from their mothers, so that a little time must be allowed. A calf does not always know its own mother, but no mother mistakes her own offspring. This is the second basis of the cunning handling of the wild herds. The cowman has the cattle of the range all together now, and knows they will tend to hang together for a time and not separate. He knows also that the calves will run with their mothers, so that the brand of the mother will prove the ownership of the calf. Presently the intense, trying work of the cutting out will begin, in which all these calves will be sorted out and labelled in the great joint inventory of the range.

At this stage of the round-up operations there

again comes into play the question of local conditions. It is all a matter of locality what shall be the description of the cattle to be separated, and this again is a matter which has been subject to change of custom in the trade. If this round-up be, for instance, in one of the thickly settled districts of Montana, no attention is paid to any but the calves and unbranded cattle. There is no attempt to sort or separate the different herds of branded cattle belonging to different owners, or to drive back a given owner's cattle toward his range. All the cows and calves are cut out from the general herd, and are held in a separate body, the rest of the entire herd being allowed to scatter and depart at will over the common range. The calves are then taken indiscriminately from this cow herd and branded duly according to their mothers' brands.

On yet other portions of the range the ranchmen may not be so numerous or the ranges may be larger. Perhaps there are a few owners whose interests are practically the same, by reason of the ranging habits of their cattle. They know that their cattle are not apt to go off a certain range, and therefore they do not trouble themselves to keep track of them. But they would not like these cattle to wander, say, one hundred miles from home. If in a round-up there should be found cattle, say, of five or six different brands, all pretty well within the country where they belonged, no effort would be made to separate these. But if on the same country there should be found a number of cattle of some outfit, known to be perhaps a hundred miles from the range where they belonged, it would be part of the duty of the round-up to cut out these cattle and "throw them over" to the proper range. In all things the common sense of the cowman governs. Thus it may happen that the entire

herd of a certain outfit is thus cut out and thrown over without a single calf being branded, because the cowman knows it would not be good for these calves to be driven perhaps fifty miles or so immediately after the branding and other operations of the round-up. All the time there are numbers of these round-ups and subround-ups going on, as the necessities of the situation demand. Sometimes the big corrals of a convenient ranch are used. It is a singular fact that corral work was once more common, for instance, in certain parts of Wyoming than it is to-day. It was known that organized bands of cattle thieves, characterized by the cowmen as "some boys who were a little on the rustle," had a habit of using these corrals at night to hold together the bunches of calves they were running out of the country, the rustlers being shrewd enough to know that they could in no better way render tractable a bunch of calves than by keeping them a few nights away from their mothers, who would surely run them off during the night if all were left out in the open together. It thus seeming that the ranch corrals were being used in the robbery of the men who built them, the latter tore them down and after that relied upon the open round-up. The latter form of the round-up work is, of course, the more interesting, and we shall suppose that the herd is made out on the open range and held together simply by the force of horsemanship.

It having been agreed, then, what sort of cattle are to be cut out, the work of separation begins, perhaps two or three different "cuts" being in progress at the same time, each of these "cuts" being held at a distance from the main herd. As it is difficult to overcome the disposition of an animal to break back and join its fellows in the main herd when it is singled out

and driven, it is customary to start the "cut" with some sober-minded old cattle which are willing to stand where they are placed, and so serve as a nucleus for the growing band, the cowboy here again calling to his aid the habit of gregariousness among the cattle.

The calf branding is the chief work of the round-up, and it would be difficult to find work more exacting and exhausting. The cowpuncher prepares for this deliberately. When he goes into the herd to cut out calves he mounts a fresh horse, and every few hours he again changes horses, for, though some horses are better than others in cutting out, there is no horse which can long endure the fatigue of the rapid and intense work of cutting. Before the rider stretches a sea of interwoven horns, waving and whirling as the densely packed ranks of cattle close in or sway apart. It is no prospect for a weakling, but into it goes the cowpuncher on his determined little horse, heeding not the plunging and crushing and thrusting of the excited cattle. Down under the heels of the herd, half hid in the whirl of dust, he spies a little curly calf running, dodging, and twisting, always at the heels of its mother. The cowpuncher darts in and after, following the two through the thick of surging and plunging beasts. The sharp-eyed pony sees almost as soon as his rider which cow is wanted, and he needs small guidance from that time on. He follows hard at her heels, edging her constantly toward the flank of the herd, at times nipping her hide as a reminder of his own superiority. In spite of herself the cow gradually turns out toward the edge, and at last is rushed clear of the crush, the calf following close behind her. Very often two cowpunchers work together in the operation of cutting out, this facilitating matters somewhat.

Already preparations have been made for the animals cut out. The branding men have fire and fuel, and irons are heated to a cherry red. All the irons of the outfits represented are on hand at the fire, a great many of them, and easily to be confused withal. A "tally man," to keep record of the calves branded to each outfit, has been appointed by the captain to serve as general clerk of the round-up. This man, of course, has opportunity to favour one outfit or another by falsifying his scores, but this contingency is never considered in the rude ethics of the range, where civilized suspicion, known as conservatism, has not yet fully entered. The tally man is usually chosen for his fitness to keep these accounts, or perhaps for his unfitness to do other work at the time. Perhaps there is some oldish cowman, or some one who has been sick, or who has been hurt in the riding of the previous day, and who, though not fit for the saddle, will do for the book. This man acts as the agent of all the outfits, and upon his count depends each owner's estimate of his season's profits.

As the cowpuncher rushes his first cow and calf clear of the herd, the tally man stands near the fire, sharpening his pencil with a knife disproportionately large. Even as he looks over toward the herd there is a swirl of the long loop which has hung just clear of the ground as the cowpuncher rode out into the open after his quarry. The loop spreads and hisses out into a circle as it flickers and curves about the cowpuncher's head, and then it darts out and down like the stoop of a hawk. The unfortunate calf is laid by the heels. The pony stops and squats, flaring back upon its haunches, its mane falling forward over its gleaming eyes, its sides heaving, its quarters already gray with the dust of the herd. There is a twist of the rope about the horn of the saddle, and all is

over with the wild life of the curly, bawling calf. It is flipped lightly upon its side, and away it goes, skating along over the sagebrush, regardless of cuts or bruises, up to the fire where the irons glow and where the tally man now has his pencil sharpened. Two men seize it as it comes into their field of operations. One catches it by the ears and twists its head sideways, sitting down upon it so that the little creature can not move. Another man casts free the rope and lays hold of its hind legs, pushing one far forward with his own foot, and pulling the other back at full length with both his brawny hands. Helpless, the calf lies still, panting. A man approaches with a glowing iron fresh from the fire, and claps this, hissing and seething, upon the shrinking hide. A malodorous cloud of smoke arises from the burning hair. The iron cuts quite through the hair and full into the hide, so that the mark shall never grow over again with hair. A piteous bawl arises from the little animal—a protest half drowned by the rush of mingled sounds about. Meantime a third man trims out with a sharp knife the required slice, if any, which is to be taken from the ear or dewlap to complete the registered mark of the owner. In a moment the calf is released and shoved to one side to rejoin its mother, who mutters at its injuries, and licks it soothingly. The calf stands with legs spread wide apart, sick and dizzy, indisposed to move, and shorn for many days of much of its friskiness. Mother and calf alike are hustled out of the way. The tally man calls out, "Bar Y, one calf." Another calf is by this time coming skating up to the fire, and again the iron is hissing. Meantime the hubbub and the turmoil increase, until all seems again lost to chaos. Taut ropes cross the ground in many directions. The cutting ponies pant and sweat, rear and plunge. The

garb of the cowpuncher now is one of white alkali, which hangs gray in his eyebrows and mustache. Steers bellow and run to and fro. Cows charge on their persecutors, amid confusion and great laughings. Fleet yearlings and young cows break away and run for the open, pursued by cowboys who care not how or where they ride. The dust and the lowings and bellowings and runnings wax until all seems hopeless. Yet all the time the irons are busy, all the time the calves are sliding up to the fire, all the time the voice of the tally man is chanting, and all the time the lines of figures are growing longer on his grimy pages. The herd lessens. The number of calves visible among the cattle becomes small. Finally the last calf is cut out and branded. The cowpunchers pull up their heaving ponies. The branding men wipe their faces. The tally man again sharpens his pencil. The herd is "worked." It may scatter now as it wills. This field has been reaped. It remains now to go on to other fields.

At the close of the day's work the men have less disposition to romp and play pranks than they had at the start in the morning. They are weary, but weary with that fatigue readily shaken off by a man in fine health and good condition. The cooks and teamsters have prepared the camp, and the professional duties of the cowpuncher close when he takes off his saddle. Until bedtime, which comes soon after the evening meal, he may lounge and smoke. The cook has prepared abundance of food for these hard-working men, whose constant exercise in the fresh air gives them good appetites. In the *menu* of the round-up fresh beef is sure to figure, and beef of the best sort running in the herd. It makes no difference whose brand is on the animal desired for the mess; if

wanted, it is forthwith roped, thrown, and butchered. In the old days no account was kept of the round-up beef, but of later days the owner of an animal killed for beef is usually credited with it on the round-up books. Sometimes, when time and opportunity offer, the cowpuncher has for his dinner a dish probably unknown elsewhere than on the range, and not common there. A choice bit of "porterhouse" steak, cut thick, is placed between two steaks of similar size and excellence, and the whole buried under a bed of hot coals. In this way the middle steak retains all the juices of its double envelope, and offers a morsel which might well be appreciated by a man less hungry or more particular than the tired cowpuncher. A pound or so of beef, with some tinned vegetables, taken with a quart or so of coffee, and the cowpuncher is ready to hunt his blankets and make ready for another day. He does not work on the eight hours a day schedule, but works during the hours when it is light enough to see. The end of the day may find him some miles from where the cooks' fires are gleaming, and the swift chill of the night of the plains may have fallen before his jogging pony, which trots now with head and ears down, brings him up to the camp which for him, as much as any place on earth, is home.

Such is something of the routine of the round-up, and one day, barring the weather conditions, is like another throughout the long and burning summer, one round-up following another closely all through the season. The work is a trifle monotonous to the cowboy, perhaps, in spite of its exciting features, and is to-day more monotonous than it was in the past, before the good old days had left the plains forever. In those times the country was wilder, and there was more of novelty and interest in the operations of the

range. To-day the great plains are but a vast pasture ground for the cattle belonging to the community of cowmen, and the highly differentiated system of the round-up progresses as a purely business operation, whose essential object is the establishment of the individual rights of each member of that community. The methods of the round-up seem of necessity rude and inaccurate, but really they are singularly efficient and precise. The skilled labour of the cowpuncher gives to each man that which belongs to him, and nothing more.

It is a curious review, that which passes under the eyes of the tally men and branders during the calf harvesting. Sometimes a calf comes up with a cow whose hide is a network of confused and conflicting brands, so that it is impossible to tell justly whose property she is. In such a case the calf is not branded at all to any owner, but is thrown into the association credit, where it belongs equally to all, and where its value will be equally divided. Sometimes in the hurry of the work a calf is branded with the wrong iron, and is thus given the sign of a man to whom it does not belong. This would seem to be a puzzling proposition to the cowpuncher, for the brand is something which, to use the cowpuncher's phrase, does not "come out in the washin'." Yet the remedy is very simple. Another calf is "traded back" for the calf wrongly branded, the proper brand of the former calf being placed upon the "traded" calf. Of course, this leaves two mismatched calves on the range, whose brands do not tally with those of their mothers, but within the year time will have equalized the error, for the calves will have left their mothers, and the one will probably be worth about as much as the other.

Mingled with such questions as these during the

branding operations are always the complex ones of strays and Mavericks. Sometimes a stray cow is found during the round-up bearing the brand of a man foreign to that round-up district, or one not represented in the round-up. The increase of this animal is branded with the brand of its owner, who has been no party to the transaction at all, but who has been safe under the system of the round-up. In the case of Mavericks found during the round-up, a like intelligent and just method obtains. Roughly speaking, an animal must be a yearling to be a Maverick, and on some ranges this rule is laid down, though really a Maverick becomes such at the time when it ceases to follow the cow and begins to shift for itself. If it is missed in the first round-up of its life, it falls under the rules or laws governing the handling of Mavericks, such rules offering considerable local variations. On some ranges of Wyoming, for instance, the cowmen have agreed lines establishing the borders of their respective ranges, and a cowman may brand for his own a calf running on his range and not following any cow. This right is merely one of comity among the local ranchers, and one which it is not expected will be abused. Indeed, the comity goes still further, showing yet more clearly the interdependence and mutual confidence of the cowmen. If after the round-up a rancher finds a neighbour's calf unbranded, but following the cow upon his own range, he brands the calf with the owner's proper brand, and not with his own. This is simply a matter of individual honesty. The cowman knows that his neighbour will do as much for him. Each ranch keeps its own separate tally-book in this way, and these are exchanged at the end of the season, so that each man gets what belongs to him, no matter where it may have wan-

dered, and no matter whether he ever sees it again or not. It has been elsewhere mentioned that on some parts of the range all the Mavericks are sold at auction before the beginning of the round-up (always to some resident cowman who is known to be responsible). In this case, when a Maverick is found in the round-up it is dragged to the fire—perhaps by two ropes, for it is big and lusty—and has put upon it the “vent brand” of the association, thus securing an abstract of title which it is to carry with it through life, and which will hold good in any cattle market of the land.

It may readily be seen how honest and how expert must be the men who carry out so intricate a system. It should be borne in mind that brands do not show so distinctly upon hide as they do upon paper, and, of course, it must be remembered that a range cow may carry more than one brand, and perhaps a “vent brand” or so, if she has changed ownership before. Here again there may be exceptions arising out of local conditions. For instance, if a herd of cattle is brought from a far Southern range to one in the North, where that brand is not met and is not recorded, it is not always the case that the owner will have these animals counterbranded; for it is known that no confusion will arise if they are left as they are, and, of course, the fewer brands an animal carries the easier it is to tell whose it is. It is justice, and justice by the shortest and most practical route, which is the desire of the cowman, whether that imply the branding of a Maverick or the hanging of a cattle thief.

After the calf round-up comes the beef round-up, and this, too, may be called the cowman’s harvest, or his final harvest. The beef round-up may begin in

July or August, and perhaps it may be conducted by the joint efforts of two districts instead of one. The joint outfit acts under much the same system of gathering up the cattle as has been described for the calf round-up. All the cattle of the range are gathered in great herds, and the latter are handled as during the calf round-up, though the operation is somewhat simpler. Only the mature or fattened animals are cut out from the herd, the rest being left to scatter as they like. The separated number goes under the name of the "beef cut," and this "cut" is held apart and driven on ahead from place to place as the round-up progresses, the beef herd thus growing from day to day until all the range has been worked. The herd is then driven in by easy stages to the shipping point on the railroad, where it is perhaps held until the arrival of the herd from the adjoining district, so that the shippers may be reasonably sure they have in all the beef fit for shipment from their ranges. Then the long train loads of cattle go on to the great markets, and the work of the ranchman proper is done for the season. Perhaps in the shipment of beef there may be a few animals picked up on the range during the beef drive which belong to some owner or owners not represented in the outfits. Such animals, if fit for shipment as beef, are driven along with the main herd and shipped and sold without the owners' knowledge, the money being returned to the owners in due time through the inspectors at the markets. Obviously this is better than allowing these animals to run wild and unutilized as strays upon the range, of no profit to the owners or any one else. The common sense and the fairness of the cowman's system prevail on the beef round-up as in the harvesting of the calves.

So perfect is this great interdependent system of the

round-up on the main cattle ranges of to-day that the ranchmen trust to it almost entirely for the determining and the handling of their yearly product. Range riding is now nearly done away with in some of the more populous districts, the cattle ranging in common over the country as they like, with no efforts made to confine them to any given range. All these things are modified by local conditions, and the whole system of ranching cattle is becoming modified by the advance of time. To-day the rancher uses more and more feed about his ranch. He raises hay for his stock, a bit of grain for his horses in winter time, or perhaps he buys hay or grain of the "grangers" who are moving in about him. Speaking in the original and primitive sense, this is not range work at all. The cowman proper depended solely upon the standing grass for his cattle food, upon the saddle for the assembling of his wealth, upon his own iron for the marking of it.

If it be now obvious what is the intention of the cowman in the round-up and what the method by which he obtains his purposes, we shall none the less fail of a fair review of this business system if we lose sight of the chief actor in all these operations, the cowpuncher himself. His is the tireless form that rides day after day in rain or shine throughout the long season, collecting the cattle upon their wild pasture ground, and his the undaunted heart to meet all the hardships of one of the hardest callings known to men. From May until November he may be in the saddle, each week growing gaunter and grimmer and more bronzed, his hair and mustache becoming more and more bleached and burned, his eye perhaps more hollow though not less bright and keen. If he be tired, none may know it; if he be sick, it shall not appear;

if he be injured, it must not be confessed until confession is unnecessary. His creed is one of hardihood, his shibboleth is to dare, his etiquette is not to complain. Such doctrine is not for the weak. It is no place for a timid man, this grinding crush in the middle of the herd, and the cowardly or considerate horseman would better ride elsewhere than in the mad and headlong cross-country chases of the round-up. The goring of a steer, the fall from a pitching horse, the plunge over a cut bank, the crushing of a limb in the press, or the trampling under a thousand hoofs—such possibilities face the cowpuncher on the round-up not part of the time, but all the time. He accepts them as matter of course and matter of necessity, and with the ease of custom. Yet he is mortal and may suffer injury. If the injury be not fatal, he accepts it calmly, and waits till he is well again. If a round-up knows a burial, it is not the first one which has been known. Men of action must meet fatality at times, and other men of action will have small time to mourn them. The conditions of life upon the range are severe, so severe that had they been known in advance they would have been shunned by hundreds of men who in their ignorance thought themselves fit for cowboys and learned later that they were not.

It goes without saying that so hardy and healthy a creature as this cowpuncher must have his amusements, even at his times of hardest work. The round-up is by no means a succession of dreary experiences, for it is there that one will find the most grotesque exhibitions of cowpuncher vitality and cowpuncher merriment. There probably never was a round-up where the boys did not rope a steer for some ambitious cowpuncher to ride bareback for a wager. This feat is not so easy as it looks, for the hide of a steer, or,

worse yet, the hide of a big fat bull, is loose and rolling, so that, as the cowpuncher would say, it "turns plum over between a feller's legs." Sometimes a yearling or a runty little "doggy" is roped for this form of sport, the cowpuncher wreathing his long legs under its belly to its intense disgust and fright, though he probably sits it safely when the ropes are "turned loose" in spite of its antics, for it is the boast of a first-class cowpuncher that he can "ride ary thing that wears ha'r." Sometimes the cowboys enter into competitive tests of skill, trying to see which man can, alone and unassisted, in the shortest space of time, "rope, throw, and tie" a full-grown steer. It would seem almost impossible for one man to perform this feat, yet a good cowpuncher will do it so smoothly and swiftly that neither the steer nor the spectator can tell just how it happened. Yet another little sport on the round-up is sometimes to hitch up a cow and a broncho or "mean" horse together to a wagon, the horse jumping and plunging over the cow to the intense delight of these rough souls, to whom the wildest form of action is the most congenial.

It is taken for granted that all the men engaging in a round-up are good riders, and if it should chance that any one becomes entangled in an argument with a pitching pony, the event is one of great pleasure to his friends, who gather about him and give him encouragement of the cowpuncher sort, with abundant suggestions as to how he shall ride and much insistence that he must "ride him fair." If the cowpuncher is thrown, he is sure to get more jeers than sympathy, but it is his business not to be thrown. Nowadays the horse herd, always one of the picturesque features about the round-up, is losing some of its old interest with the gradual passing away of the habit of bucking

or pitching among the range horses. The horse herd is to-day much graded up, as are the herds of cattle, and the modern cow pony may be quite a respectable bit of horseflesh. It is apt to be a more solid and "chunky" animal than the old Spanish pony, just as the cowboy himself is apt to be a more bulky man than the first cowpunchers who came up the Trail. One may note yet other changes. At the strictly modern round-up of to-day one will see few leather "chaps," few heavy hats with wide leather bands, few bucking horses, and no "guns." If we would study the cowpuncher we must do so soon, if we wish ever to see him as he once was at his best; and if we would see a round-up on the range we should not tarry too long, for yearly it becomes more and more restricted, modified, and confined, less and less a wild gathering of the plains, more and more a mere barnyard fixture. The days of the commonplace have come, and well may we mourn the past that has gone by.

The stirring scenes of the round-up, the rush and whirl of the cutting out, the hurry and noise of the branding, the milling of the main herds, and all the gusty life of the wild *mêlée* are things to remember as long as one lives, and they readily invite the multifold descriptive efforts that have been given them. Yet aside from the common or conventional pictures there may arise detached ones, some perhaps from out of the past, perhaps wilder and more picturesque than those we may easily find to-day at the focus of affairs upon the range. Memory brings up a little scene far down in the dry and desert region of the Neutral Strip, where once our party of antelope hunters crossed the range where a round-up was in progress. We had noticed the many hoof prints of cattle and horses, all trending in a certain direction,

and guessed the cause when we saw the long lines of dust rising and stringing out on the hazy and trembling horizon. In that barren and flinty-soiled region water is a rare thing, and he who does not know the water holes for the country a hundred miles about would far better do his antelope hunting elsewhere. Yet we knew we were near the line of the old cattle trails, and indeed just before noon one day fell upon the wide parallel lines ground out of the hard, gray soil by the thousands of hoofs that had crossed the country in earlier years. Thinking that we should thus come upon water at some time either that day or the next, we followed along the trail, and, as luck had it, within a couple of hours we fell upon a little pool of water by the wayside. It was a very baddish bit of water, muddy, discoloured, trampled, shallow at best, and now hardly sufficient to fill the hoof marks with its greenish-yellow fluid that fairly boiled under the downright rays of the sun. Yet it was water, and such as it was we were glad to find it, since it was the first for more than twenty-four hours. We camped beside it joyfully, feeling that now all the trials of life were past. As we lay there, under such shade as the wagon offered on the blindingly hot day, we saw a trail of dust coming from the line of hills about us, and with the glasses soon made out a squad of mounted men. These came on down to the water hole, and in time were joined there by other men who came from various directions. The party was the mess of a Strip outfit that had been out all day rounding up cattle back of the watering place. The men were hot and tired and covered with dust, but if any one was disposed to grumble he kept it to himself. The cook unfastened the tail-gate of his wagon, and in a twinkling had a kitchen table and pantry right at hand,

with flour and meat within reach. Some of the boys kicked together enough of the abundant prairie chips—the only fuel within sixty miles of that point—and soon the preparations for the hurried meal were in progress. When the cook wanted water for his coffee he walked to the pool—in which, by the way, several dead carcasses were lying—and, picking out the point where the water seemed clearest, he calmly dipped up his coffeepot full and returned without comment to the fire. No one said a word about the quality of the water, which really was of a sort to make one shudder at the memory years later, and if the coffee was not good no one complained of it. From the mess box the cook produced his tin dishes, his knives and forks, and table was spread without cloth flat on the dusty and hoof-beaten soil. The heat was glaring, and in it, without suspicion of shade, the men sat, their flannel shirts covered over the shoulders with the white dust of the plains, their broad hats pushed back upon their foreheads as they ate. It was a scene for some better painter or writer than has yet appeared, this dusty, weather-beaten, self-reliant little body of men. Each face of the circle comes to mind clearly even after years of time. They were silent, dignified fellows, these men, not talking much among themselves or with us, though they offered us of what they had, we having apparently convinced them that we were not “on the rustle,” we in turn sharing with them what our mess box offered, as it happened some fresh game, which was much appreciated.

Before the meal began each man unsaddled his horse and turned it loose upon the prairie, where it first went to water and then set to feeding on the short sun-burned grass. When it came time to leave camp, the horses were rounded up by the herder, a young boy not over fif-

teen years of age, whom all the men called "Kid." In their rough way they seemed fond of the boy, who had evidently shown the quality demanded on the plains, and as the boy gathered up his horses into the rope corral made by two or three cow ponies and a couple of men as supports, the round-up boss looked on at his businesslike movements with approval, and remarked aside to one of the men, "That's a d—n good kid all right." To which the other replied with an approving grunt. The Kid rounded up his charges swiftly, and got them into a many-coloured mass of mingling heads and tossing manes within the confines of the rope corral, after which the work of roping the mounts followed. The Kid begged of the foreman the privilege of doing the roping, and the latter, smiling in rough fashion, gave him what he asked, not laughing at his failures, but giving him a bit of advice about his work now and then when he had a specially wily pony to capture from out the moving and plunging bunch of wild range horses. It was a good instance of the chivalry sometimes shown by stronger natures to ones weaker or less skilled, and it afforded also a good example of the development of the cowboy from youth to manhood, from inexperience to skill.

Presently each man had out his mount, and had saddled the grunting and complaining beast in the effective fashion of the plains. There was a little mild pitching, but not enough to interest the tired cow-punchers. In a trice the rope corral was down and the ropes coiled at the saddle horns of their owners. The cook had his mess wagon slapped shut, and the teamster his team "hooked up." The men rode away as silent as they came, the foreman and some of those passing most closely to us saying as they rode by, "So long, fellers." No one looked back as he rode

away, for this would have been a bit of curiosity not in good form on the range. They passed away into the edge of the rim of hills, and we saw them no more.

Such is one picture of the range, and it shows the cowboy not as a devil-may-care, roistering fellow, full of strange oaths and uncouth conduct, but, as he should perhaps better be seen, as a steady, hard-working, methodical man, able in his calling, faithful in his duties, and prompt in their fulfilment. These men were grimy with toil of a most exacting sort. Their fare was coarse and common, and even the first necessary of comfort was denied them. They were rudely clad, and all armed to the last item, for that was a country where arms were at times needful. Yet hard as was their apparent lot, and rude as they who shared it, their simple and uncomplaining hardihood and self-control, their dignity, and their generous conduct to the younger member of the party left a lasting impression—perhaps a good one of its kind—of the cowboy as he is in actual life upon the range.

Santa Clara County
Free Library
San Jose, Cal



Santa Clara County
LIBRARY

Renewals:
(800) 471-0991
www.santaclaracountylib.org

